

## REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

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1. REPORT NUMBER	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO. AD-A149352	3. RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
4. TITLE (and Subtitle) Chosin Reservoir: Defensive, Retrograde, Winter, 1st Marine Division 27 November - 11 December 1950		5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED Student Paper
7. AUTHOR(s) MAJ F. M. Berger, MAJ J. D. Lenard, MAJ W. S. Wallace, MAJ R. S. Robichaud, MAJ D. M. Mize, MAJ W. R. Norton		6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER
8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS Combat Studies Institute, USACGSC ATEL-SWI, Ft. Leavenworth, KS 66027		9. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s)
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS Combat Studies Institute, USACGSC ATEL-SWI, Ft. Leavenworth, KS 66027		10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS (if different from Controlling Office)		12. REPORT DATE 30 June 1983
		13. NUMBER OF PAGES 86
		15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report) Unclassified
		15a. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE
16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report) Approved for public release: Distribution unlimited.		
17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report) B		
18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Part of the Battle Analysis series prepared by students of the US Army Command and General Staff College under the supervision of Combat Studies Institute.		
19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) History. Case Studies, Military Operations, Tactical Analysis, Battles, Military Tactics, Tactical Warfare, Armor, Artillery, Infantry, Joint Military Activities, Marine Corps Operations, Tactical Air Support, Tanks (Combat Vehicles). Free Terms: Chosin Reservoir, Defensive-Retrograde, Winter Warfare.		
20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) This battle analysis addresses the battle of Chosin Reservoir from 27 November to 11 December 1950 in northeastern North Korea during which the 1st Marine Division and some attached U.S. Army units fought their way out of encirclement by Communist Chinese Forces (CCF). In the process, these United States forces rendered combat ineffective, nine Chinese divisions and brought out their equipment and wounded with them. (Amharic)		

AD-A149 352

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⑥ CHOSIN RESERVOIR;

*Defenses, Retention of  
Water, 1st Marine Division,  
27 November - 11 December 1950.*

A Battlebook presented to the Staff and Faculty of  
the United States Army Command and General  
Staff College in fulfillment of the  
requirements for A660

by

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APPROVED FOR PUBLICATION  
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## CHOSIN RESERVOIR

### I. Introduction to the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir

A. The following battle analysis addresses the battle of Chosin Reservoir from 27 November to 11 December 1950 in northeastern North Korea during which the 1st Marine Division and some attached U.S. Army units fought their way out of encirclement by Communist Chinese Forces (CCF). In the process, these United States forces rendered combat ineffective, nine Chinese divisions and brought out their equipment and wounded with them.

B. This battle was selected for study for several reasons. The first reason was parochial. Marine officers constituted the majority of the study group and there was a desire to study a battle where USMC organization, tactics, and history could be analyzed. Second, this battle offered the most recent example of a major breakout effort by U.S. Forces. Given the current Soviet tactics and military capability, knowledge of breakout operations would be particularly valuable information for operators and commanders. This is true because in any conflict with the Soviets, there is a good chance that certain U.S. units would, at least initially, be bypassed and encircled. Third, the area in which this operation occurred, with all the weather and terrain related problems, is an area in which today both the Army and Marine Corps have very active contingency commitments. Much that would still be applicable today could be learned from how the U.S. forces in this battle overcame the weather and terrain of Korea in the winter.

C. There was a wealth of material available on this battle. It was covered in great detail in the press and in news magazines at the time the battle was conducted. Numerous articles, books, and official histories written on the Chosin Reservoir battle, often by participants, were also available. Ample source material was present in the CGSC Library on X Corps operations and at the Historical Division, Headquarters, Marine Corps, on the 1st Marine Division.

### II. The Strategic Setting--Determining the Causes of the Conflict

#### A. Introduction

In describing the 1st Marine Division's part "at the Reservoir" or "at Chosin," as Marines are wont to describe it, one should understand how this battle came to be in order to better assess the battle itself and to determine the impact of the action. To do this, we will provide some pertinent information on events prior to the Korean War and then discuss some aspects of the Korean War that give one the background needed to analyze the battle. In our discussion of prewar events, we will focus on a historical overview of the United States and China, the relationship of China and the United States from 1900-1945, and the period 1945-1950 as it

relates to the U.S., China, and Korea. This discussion of the Korean War will be divided into six parts: an explanation of the North Korean intervention, an explanation of the United States' intervention, the course of the war from 25 June 1950 until the link-up of U.S./U.N. Forces near the 38th parallel, the war from the crossing of the 38th parallel to the initial Chinese intervention, an explanation of the Chinese intervention, and data on the critical events of 6-27 November 1950. As you will see, there are certain critical points in the train of events leading to the battle. At each of these junctions, a different decision than the one taken might have resulted in the battle never being fought and/or a world different than we know today. Thus, we will focus on these questions: Why did North Korea attack? Why did the U.S. intervene? Why did General MacArthur delay his pursuit for fourteen days and then split his command into two non-supportive elements? Why did the Chinese intervene? Why didn't the U.S. know of the massive Chinese build-up prior to their commitment in late November 1950?

#### B. Prelude to War

We begin to determine the steps leading to the Chosin Reservoir by looking at each of the antagonists, their relationship, and the period 1945-1950. The United States was a relatively young country which gained, by revolution, its independence from Britain in the late 1700s. During the next 125 years this country was less concerned with external affairs than with developing its rich natural resources. However, by 1900, the United States had developed into a world power. Within the next 45 years it would fight in two world wars and at the end of World War II emerged as the most powerful nation on the face of the earth.

The policies of the United States reflected its place in history. A continuing theme in American policy was isolationism. Populated by citizens who escaped the wars and hardship of Europe, the country was enjoined by its Founding Fathers to "avoid foreign entanglements." The Monroe Doctrine was a policy that sought to prevent the Americas from being tainted by European influence. Fortunately for the country, its protection by the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and weak, usually friendly neighbors made isolationism feasible. Another theme running through American policy was its idealism. Americans felt their system of government was the best in the world and tended to judge other nations based on their adherence to American democratic values. In warfare, contrary to the opinions of some, Americans were quite willing to wage limited war to realize limited aims. In fact, all its wars prior to World War I, except the Civil War, were limited wars. Once the U.S. realized its aim, independence, freedom to trade, or land, it was quite willing to live and let live. However, in the 20th Century this changed. World War I was fought to defeat the Germans, not for any limited gain such as to restore France's territory. Americans were conditioned by their leaders to think of World War I as "the war to end all wars" and to believe that success would "make the world safe for democracy (forever)." Yet within 25 years the U.S. would find itself in another war. During the

1930s and early 1940s Americans were isolationists, even pacifists, as they viewed the policies of appeasement and aggression in Europe and Asia. With much of the world at war in 1941, President Roosevelt assured the public in one of his "fireside chats" that "I will not send one American boy to fight in Europe." With the attack on Pearl Harbor, Americans felt the interwar policies of compromise and negotiation were false gods. They waged a war in which the only aim was to totally defeat the axis powers, and cause their unconditional surrender. Its citizens wanted a return to normalcy free from "foreign entanglements." They were not prepared for the burdens of Pax Americana in the postwar world. For example, the Soviet Union's status was confusing. From 1917 until World War II the U.S. and U.S.S.R. were bitter enemies. During the war a massive propaganda campaign was mounted in the U.S. to put the Soviets in the role of friend and ally. After the war it quickly became apparent that the U.S. and U.S.S.R. would again be bitter enemies because of the realignment of the balance of power.

The armed forces of the United States also reflected its unique place in history. There developed, in the U.S., a conflict between those who supported a professional military and those who supported a citizen soldier that sprang to his country's defense in time of need. Due somewhat to the security of the U.S., the citizen soldier system was more strongly supported. Also, due to its security, the U.S.'s conflicts were, prior to 1918, generally small unit actions to expand the nation's frontiers. Thus, the small unit leader and individual were the most experienced and were most idealized. Due also to its security and citizen soldier tradition, U.S. military forces were emasculated at the conclusion of wars so that its citizen soldiers could return home. Throughout its history, the U.S. government garnered support of its wars by relating the war to defense of the homeland. Another theme worth noting is that whenever the military forces of the U.S. were used, this action was seen as a last resort; every other means to solve a problem had failed. The U.S. tended to view war and politics as separate entities as opposed to other nations which viewed war as part of politics. One might say that Americans had more faith that war could solve problems. But how did the U.S. military perform in war? In 1945 Americans felt that they had won every war in which they had participated. However, when the wars are examined in detail several patterns emerge. First, there is very little unique American doctrine for the conduct of war. Generally, Americans copied European doctrine except for the evolution of Indian fighting. Prior to the Civil War, small unit tactics was the doctrine for much of the military. By 1900, Americans, due to their economic strength, often equated firepower with doctrine. Yet paradoxically in the period 1920-1945, American mechanized doctrine lagged much of the world. In fact, amphibious and naval air operations were the only areas in which American doctrine was superior and unique. The leadership of the military for most of its existence was mediocre at best. This was in large measure due to the smallness of units involved in wars, the lack of professionalism in its officers, the country's isolation, and the small size of standing forces. It is generally accepted that in

World War II the expertise of the U.S. division and corps commanders was less than that of its allies and even the Germans. Of note is the fact that during postwar demobilizations, many of the military's most experienced leaders returned to civilian life. Likewise, training was not very impressive, nor was the equipment of the military. However, during the Second World War, training and equipping the army was much improved over previous conflicts.

The other antagonist, China, had a completely different history. Chinese civilization was ancient, and China had been a country for over 3,000 years. Over the years, Chinese civilization flourished and waned. During its golden age, that of the Middle Kingdom, China's influence spread over most of mainland Asia, including Korea. During this period the relationship of other nations to China was unique. Other nations, say Vietnam or Korea, acknowledged China's dominance and paid tribute (often symbolic) to her. These states were often not satellites or conquered lands however. China would usually help protect these lands from outside invasion. It can best be described as a symbiotic relationship; in exchange for security on its borders, China spread its culture and protection to other nations. During most of its existence, China's policy has been to play one "barbarian" against another to maintain China's security. Just as the West flourished from 1500-1900, China began to decay. By 1900, China had been forced into unequal treaties by the West and its influence had waned in Asia. It was considered the "sick man of Asia." Feelings of nationalism grew stronger and stronger from 1900 onwards, with the Chinese seeking to control their destiny. These aims were frustrated time and again. For instance, although an ally in World War I, China felt cheated at Versailles and was forced to concede territory to Japan. By 1927, there were two factions seeking control of the country. On one side were the Nationalists, headed by Chiang Kai-shek, who were the forces in power. Although espousing the revolutionary principles of Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, their policies seemed designed to maintain the status quo or to "turn back the clock." On the other side were the communists, headed by Mao Tse-tung. After breaking an alliance with the Nationalists, the Communists were nearly exterminated and were saved only by the "Long March" to remote Yunan province. The survivors, tough and determined, then began a civil war for control of China. During the 1930s the Japanese invaded China and violated her while the rest of the world gave little support. With the entry of Russia and the U.S. into World War II, more aid was given to the various factions in order to fight the Japanese. Both factions, although fighting many bloody battles with the Japanese, largely saved themselves for the civil war, which both knew was coming. World War II ended with China on the "winning" side yet forced to make concessions to her allies. On balance, by 1945 all Chinese were becoming more xenophobic and sought foreign scapegoats for its ills.

Chinese armed forces had been in existence for over thirty centuries by 1945. Four hundred years before Christ, Chinese generals were maneuvering armies of 100,000 men. These Chinese were fighting sophisticated campaigns while the Western peoples were engaged in tribal

warfare. Due to its long border, the Chinese had a history of almost constant military conflict. As noted previously, they used "buffer states" and diplomacy to avoid warfare if possible, but war was considered a perhaps more "natural state of affairs" than in the West. Although traditionally known for their ability to endure hardship, these Chinese forces of the 1800s and the Nationalists were often poorly led, poorly trained, and corrupt. Like the Americans though, its individual soldiers were often respected.

Specifically, how did the Chinese and U.S. view each other from 1900-1945? The U.S. was one of the nations that forced unequal treaties on Chinese. Americans tended to view themselves as one of the "good guys." The Chinese saw little difference between the actions of the U.S. and other Western powers. However, there was perhaps a special relationship between the two countries. American missionaries, Chinese immigrants, and the democratic American ideals fostered a cultural cross-pollination between the two. Most Americans genuinely pitied the hard life of the Chinese, while many Chinese admired the democratic principles of the U.S. In the 1930s, U.S. support, little as it was, went to the Nationalists. The Communists were supported mostly by the U.S.S.R. and tended to view the U.S. as unfriendly. The peasant of China observed the corrupt Nationalists using U.S. weapons. After its initial lack of aid in World War II, the U.S. supplied Chinese forces, both Nationalist and Chinese Communists, though most went to the Nationalists. As the war progressed, the U.S. became frustrated with the Chinese lack of aggressiveness towards the Japanese and the preparation for continued civil war. The sudden collapse of Japan and in particular its Manchurian Army caught the U.S. by surprise, so that as Japan surrendered its forces in China, the U.S. had a poorly designed Chinese policy for the "peace" that followed. One of the few non-controversial statements about America's China/Asiatic-Policy in 1945 was that the U.S. did not want to become entangled in Asian affairs. However, that was not to be.

In order to narrow our focus, we now will look at the critical period 1945-1950. At war's end the balance of power was radically altered. The U.S.S.R. and the U.S. emerged as the two strongest powers in the world while the "world powers" of Japan, Germany, Britain, France, and Italy were exhausted. As World War II began to close, it became evident that the U.S.S.R. would compete with the Western democracies for control of much of the world. The U.S. was thus thrust into world-wide competition with its recent ally the U.S.S.R. Neither its leaders nor its citizens were prepared for this struggle. As we have continued this struggle over our entire life times, it is difficult to envision the fear and frustration that Americans in the late 1940s felt when shouldering this burden. Immediately after ending another "war to end wars" the U.S. began another war no less deadly than the other. In rapid succession there were confrontations in Turkey, Greece, Iran, Berlin, Czechoslovakia, China, and Indochina. Communism was seen as monolithic, and directed from the U.S.S.R. By 1947 the government



had evolved the containment policy. This policy was the cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy and stated that it was vital to the survival of the U.S. that Communism be confined to the countries that it had already infected. The containment would be affected through aid programs, i.e. the Marshall plan, direct action, and military alliances such as NATO. The implications of this policy were enormous. By "containing" communism, the U.S. government accepted a passive, reactionary policy (as opposed to an active "roll back" philosophy) and accented communism as a legitimate system in all areas where it currently reigned. Next, any country "lost" to communism was a policy failure since containment hadn't worked, and therefore each communist (i.e. Soviet) threat had to be countered. Also, it meant that any country which opposed communism was on our side. This led to the U.S. supporting leaders whose policies were the antithesis of everything Americans believed in. This view still haunts us today. Lastly, and most importantly, this was a political policy not tied to military means or strategies. Thus, what action might be vital from a State Department view might not be vital or even feasible from a military (i.e. DOD) view. How did this policy impact on China?

When we last saw China, the Japanese had surrendered and the Nationalist and Communist forces were preparing to renew their civil war. By 1947, General Marshall's mediation mission failed and full scale civil war ensued. U.S support for the corrupt Nationalists was lukewarm at best and in 1949 the Communists controlled the mainland. Nationalist forces had fled to Hainan and Formosa Islands. Of note is the fact that although the Reds claimed military prowess, the Nationalist Armies often disintegrated rather than fighting a battle. More Nationalists surrendered than were killed; often whole regiments, even divisions surrendered and were then incorporated into the Red Army. U.S. analysts in the State Department had badly misread the ruthless Chinese leaders, especially Mao Tse-Tung, steeled in almost thirty years of continuous combat. Many felt he was Mao Tse-Tito who was more Chinese than Communist. This line of thinking stated that here was a "friend of the U.S.," an "agrarian reformer." As early as 1949 the State Department was envisioning playing the "China card" to separate China and Russia. This line of reasoning ignored the total dependence of Mao on Russian material and information. The Chinese had worn Russian spectacles for many years and now had a Soviet point of view. Nevertheless, there was no thought or support of commitment of U.S. troops to help Chiang. In fact once the mainland fell, it was assumed and generally accepted that Hainan Island and Formosa would go next. Formosa was considered part of China; the U.S., in early 1950, was not prepared to save the Nationalists on Formosa with ground, naval, or air power.

What was the political climate in the U.S. during this period? As mentioned above in 1945, Americans were war weary; they wanted a return to "normalcy" and isolation. However, Americans were shocked at the losses of the East European countries to the Soviet camp and at the loss of China. The Alger Hiss scandal and the unmasking of Soviet spies in the government

further heightened the level of anxiety. It was during this period that "The Great Conspiracy" theory was in vogue. This theory maintained that the U.S. and free world interests were willingly subverted by traitors and dupes within the government during the closing days of the war and thereafter. As a whole, the American people were dissatisfied with the containment policy which they saw as defeatist. By 1950, polls revealed that Americans had little faith in President Truman's leadership. The brilliant, but haughty Secretary of State Dean Acheson was under fire for the Hiss affair. Many Americans felt that DOD had sacrificed military preparedness in the interest of economy. In short, the administration's containment policy had not been "sold" to the American people. Yet in 1950 polls revealed that U.S. citizens were more concerned with Europe and less familiar with Asia. Fifty-seven percent expected a war in Europe within five years. A great majority supported the U.N.

Again narrowing our focus, what were Korean-U.S. relations during this crucial period? During the 1800s and prior to 1950, Americans had shown little interest in Korea. With no economic importance and few ethnic Koreans in the U.S., diplomatic relations were casual. With the surprise surrender of the Japanese in 1945, one of the tasks was to accept the surrender of Japanese forces on the mainland of Asia. However, there was a power vacuum in the North Pacific. Britain, the pre-war power, was exhausted; so the U.S. was forced to fill her shoes. The U.S. and the Russians agreed to accept the surrender of portions of the Japanese Army in Korea. This was part of the 1945 agreement at Potsdam to insure Russia's entry into the Pacific War. The line to divide the surrender zones was the 38th parallel, an arbitrary line with no basis in geography. In fact, U.S. planners selected a line well beyond the quick reach of American forces. Why the Soviets agreed to such a line which put only nine million of thirty million Koreans in their zone and which they could have easily exceeded is only a matter of speculation. In light of the lightning Soviet thrusts into Manchuria and Korea in August of 1945, they could have conquered all of Korea, and the U.S. could have done little. Three possible reasons are that the Soviets did not anticipate their rapid conquest of Manchuria and Korea, or that they were intent on dismantling Manchurian (fifty percent) and North Korean (thirty to forty percent) industrial might and shipping it to Russia, or that the U.S.S.R. did not want to challenge the U.S. at that time and place. Nevertheless the Soviets reached the 38th parallel and halted on 26 August 1945. The U.S. command decided the only available U.S. force to accept the surrender was General Hodges' XIV Corps in Okinawa. On 9 September, General Hodges accepted the Japanese surrender and began what has been characterized as a "harsh and fumbling" four-year occupation. Americans occupied a country that the Japanese had harshly ruled from 1895-1945. This Japanese rule was one in which cruelty, execution, and torture abounded and which provided no Korean governmental infrastructure. The Americans saw the Koreans as a defeated enemy but attempted a benign rule. After an initial peaceful interlude, the Koreans saw the kindness of the Americans as weakness and began a series of demonstrations, riots, and

guerrilla actions which bewildered the Americans. In the confused period of the late '40s, America still had not grasped the strategic significance of Korea, a historical invasion route to either Japan or China. Public support for the occupation fell. From the various factions in the U.S. zone, Syngman Rhee emerged as the leading rightist. Rhee wanted the U.S. out of Korea, and his anti-communist stance insured U.S. support. By 1947, the U.S. was tired of going it alone and tried to get U.N. support for resolution of the problem. In 1947, the U.N. stated that one of its aims was a united Korea governed under democratic principles. However, when the U. N. representatives attempted to enter the Soviet Zone in 1947 they were barred; and in 1948 the Russians refused to allow free elections in North Korea. In August 1948, the South Korean government was installed and seated in the U.N., and the U.S. military government was removed. On 10 September 1948, the North Korean government was installed. Both governments laid claim to all of Korea. Although U.S. forces remained in South Korea in 1948, the last of these were withdrawn in 1949 as U.S. military officials saw little strategic value in Korea. Both the leaders of North and South Korea threatened to invade the other's country to unite the peninsula. To prevent the South Koreans from carrying out their threat the U.S. did not arm the South Koreans adequately. We did not provide any tanks, fighter aircraft, heavy weapons, or anti-tank weapons. Not only were the South Koreans unable to conduct offensive operations, they could not defend themselves.

Prior to the beginning of hostilities then, the U.S. military does not see Korea as vital to the defense of the Pacific basin, the State Department sees any country lost to communism as a failure of policy, and the American people have a vague awareness of our presence in Korea. American leaders seemed equally unsupportive of Korea. In February 1949, General MacArthur excluded Korea from the Far East Defense perimeter. Part of the JCS rationale for the removal of U.S. troops from Korea was the lack of strategic significance of Korea to the U.S. Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, made a now famous speech on 12 January 1950, in which he excluded South Korea from the U.S. defense perimeter and did not provide guarantees for its safety.

The armed forces of the United States were in poor shape in 1950. As normal, American forces were gutted after the end of World War II. Immediately after VJ day, demonstrations erupted in which U.S. troops demanded to go home. Within a year the greatest military machine the world had seen was emasculated. During the late forties, America's military might was allowed to ebb further, based on the false premise that atomic weapons would render conventional war obsolete. Despite the rise in tension in the late forties, little was done to upgrade the military. Of \$30 billion requested in 1950, the Department of Defense received \$13.2 billion. Forty-three percent of the Army's enlisted personnel were in mental category IV and V. Of the ninety Army divisions in 1945, only fourteen remained, four of which were training divisions. Additionally, the Army had the

European Constabulary and nine independent Regimental Combat Teams. Each divisional regiment had only two maneuver battalions and each artillery battalion was short one battery. Of an authorized strength of 630,000 only 592,000 were present. The USAF had only forty-eight air groups and the mighty U.S. Navy had a substantial portion of its fleet in moth balls. Of the six Marine Divisions in 1945, only two remained. The military picture in the Far East was even more grim. Army strength consisted of four understrength (seventy percent) divisions, 7th, 25th, 24th, and 1st, in Japan, the 5th RCT in Hawaii, and the 29th Regt in Okinawa. The four divisions in Japan, with a strength of 82,000, were poorly trained and equipped. As occupation forces they conducted little field training, were physically soft, and had not exercised on any level larger than the company. Their equipment was worn World War II issue. They were psychologically unprepared for war. There were ninety-two World War II tanks in the whole Far East Theatre. The Air Force Far Eastern Command consisted of nine air groups with 350 fighters but only four squadrons were within reach of Korea. One-third of the Navy was in the Pacific and one-fifth of this third was in the Far East. This consisted of a cruiser and destroyer in the Far Eastern Command, and a carrier, heavy cruiser, eight destroyers, and three subs in the 7th fleet. The closest Marine division was an understrength one at Camp Pendleton, California. When brought to strength this division would consist of about one-half World War II veterans and one-half young, unseasoned troops, fresh from boot camp. The doctrine of this entire American force was that of World War II.

China, on the other hand, had quite a different experience during the period 1945-1950. By 1945, the communists and Nationalists had renewed the civil war with a vengeance. The Soviets supplied the Communists with considerable aid and support. Most of the Japanese weapons captured in China by the Soviets were covertly distributed to Mao's forces. Also, the Russians occupied Manchuria from 1945-1948 and stripped it of its heavy industry, hurting the Nationalist effort even more. The Soviets continued to provide the Communist forces with their only view of the outside world, a carry-over from the World War II experience. Thus, the Chinese developed a warped view of the world outside of China. U.S. support of Chiang diminished during this period as a result of apathy, a distaste for the corruption of the Nationalists, and a feeling that Chiang had done poorly against the Japanese and Communists with the weapons already provided. During the civil war the Communists were better organized and led; the Nationalists leaders were corrupt and the morale of the troops was poor. The Nationalists forces were hardly ever defeated in major battle but often surrendered while fighting from fixed positions. The Communists won the war by attaining a superior moral force, hence the Communists' emphasis on the moral not material. The Communists inherited the mainland in 1949.

The country that the Communists inherited had been devastated by almost continuous war from the early 1900s. There was less acreage producing food than there had been in the 1920s, the economy was stagnant.

The winter of 1949-50 saw a severe economic crisis. With a large (5,000,000), poorly equipped, and partially unreliable army, Mao sought to reduce military forces and expenditures. The Chinese realized they needed to tailor strategy to means. On the other hand, indications were that they were planning an invasion of Hainan island (which Lin Pao accomplished in early 1950), Formosa, and Tibet (which was begun in 1950); all areas historically under the influence of China. Mao also had to contend with internal and external threats. In 1950 there were 200,000 guerrillas in Hunan Province and the government was rife with Nationalist agents. The Sino-Soviet Alliance was formalized through treaty. The 1945 Sino-Soviet pledge to aid each other in the face of Japanese aggression was upgraded in the Sino-Soviet Pact of 14 February 1950 to include Japan or any state allied with her. In the late 1940s, the Soviets removed their control from Manchuria, returned Port Arthur and Dalian to the Chinese, and provided \$300 million in loans.

Now to try and provide some information on unanswerable questions. Did the Chinese know of the impending North Korean attack in early 1950? Were they planning to support the war prior to the attack? One expert feels that Stalin told Mao of the impending invasion when Mao visited Moscow in January-March 1950 and that the invasion plan was created by the Soviet General Antonov. It was noted that the 4th Field Army moved to Manchuria in April 1950 as a possible backstop to the North Koreans. Also, over 100,000 Koreans of the KVC (Korean Volunteer Corps) who had fought for the Chinese were sent to North Korea in late 1949 and 1950. Another feels that there was no preplanning for entry into the war prior to August of 1950. He notes that in the spring of 1950 Communist forces were involved in demobilization, i.e. the KVC, pacification, and economic assignments (i.e. farming). The 4th Field Army's home district was Manchuria and the redeployment after the Hainan island campaign was normal. He points out the lack of Soviet efforts to supply the Chinese Army with Soviet weapons. Still another expert feels that the Chinese were planning to help, but with the late date of the Sino-Soviet Pact, 14 February 1950, there was not time to equip Chinese divisions.

With this political climate, what were the policies of this new nation? On the theoretical side the Chinese held the Marxist view that the political aspects of a struggle were most important and that war was used to gain political ends and vice versa. Hence Mao's famous quote "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." As enumerated in his books Strategic Problems of China's Revolutionary War (1936) and On the Protracted War (1938), Mao made several pertinent points. There are just and unjust wars; only revolutionary (read Communist) wars are just. China did not necessarily desire quick wars but in the event of a long war, the masses must be politicized. There are three stages in war: enemy strategic offensive, stalemate, strategic counteroffensive (often executed after luring the enemy into a deep penetration). On the practical side the Chinese were dependent on and supported the U.S.S.R. Although xenophobic

towards the rest of the world, the Chinese accepted the Russians as friends and allies, receiving material help, ideological inspiration, and propaganda from the Soviets. The Chinese wanted recognition as a world power especially in Asian eyes. Yet, British and Indian attempts to normalize relations were rebuffed. Ironically, in 1950, the Chinese stated that there was no Third World, a country was either in the Marxist-Leninist camp or against it. The U.S. was seen as an evil power and the greatest threat to China.

What was China's relationship with Korea? China had dominated Korea from 100 B.C. to 1895 A.D. The Japanese domination was looked upon as a temporary aberration. During the Chinese civil war, over 100,000 Koreans had fought for the Communists, many in the KVC (Korean Volunteer Corps). There was a great deal of travel across the common border between the Korean and Chinese Communists. However, there was, in 1949, a distinct coolness between North Korea and Red China (China did not recognize South Korea). Historic Korean mistrust was partly responsible, as was the influence of the Russians who overshadowed the Chinese in North Korea. There was no mutual defense treaty between the two countries at the outbreak of the Korean War. Relations seemed to thaw in 1950 for China's ambassador presented his credentials in August 1950, after the war started.

What was the status of the Chinese Army, the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) in 1950? The PLA was an army new in modern history; it was a "China army with a tradition of victory." It was an army which had been at war continuously since 1927. To survive annihilation by the Nationalists, the Red Army began the "Long March" in October 1934. Starting with 300,000 soldiers, this army contained only 20,000 when the 8,300 mile journey ended in the caves of Yunnan. However, all the weak, uncommitted, or unlucky soldiers had been eliminated. Those that remained were tempered in steel and possessed an iron determination. After fighting the Nationalists from 1927-37, the PLA fought the Japanese from 1937-1945, and won the civil war in fighting from 1945-1949. When China defeated the Nationalists in 1949, the PLA numbered five million men, but it was too large and unreliable, for many former Nationalists were serving. By 1950, the size of the force had been reduced and unreliable persons were being removed. By Western standards it was not a modern army; it hadn't used tanks till 1946, aircraft till 1949, but it was modernizing.

This army's doctrine was a result of its experience in its struggles from 1927-1949. The doctrinal base for Communist leaders was Sun-Tzu and for most of their fight against the Nationalists and Japanese, they waged a fluid guerrilla war well suited to the vast countryside filled with supportive peasants. The war was characterized by deception, surprise, and masterful infiltration. Although they were never defeated as an army, the Communists never defeated either the Japanese or Nationalists army in major battle. However, the Communists won. The army drew a number of lessons from its combat experience. First, because of the size of forces engaged,

guerrilla units and divisions, tactics not strategy was developed. Because of the supportive population and condition of China's roads, the PLA saw little value in motorization/mechanization. In fact, carts and horses often moved faster over China's roads than trucks. Most importantly because of its triumph over the better equipped, corrupt Nationalists, the Chinese put great faith in the moral factor as opposed to the material one. Great efforts were made to improve individual motivation. The tactics initially employed against the U.S. were those used from 1927-1950: lightly armed, highly trained and motivated, hardy soldiers made infantry night attacks. But, prior to November 1950, China had not faced the firepower of a modern army.

The leaders of the Chinese Army were unique also. Some of them had been handling troops in combat since World War I. The Ninth Army Group general had been in charge of troops for twenty-three years, Lin Piao of the highly rated 4th Field Army had never been defeated. These commanders were masters of the retreat and quick counter-stroke. The Chinese leaders were ruthless, brutal men who did not compromise and were not intimidated by war. These generals didn't feel they could be defeated. However, the generals were leaders of men more than master strategists or even grand tacticians. One should remember also that at every level commissars policed the army and insured both leader and led "thought correctly."

The manpower of China was equally unique. The average Chinese soldier, a North China peasant, was able to endure hardships undreamed of in Western armies. His endurance was legendary, his marching ability almost unbelievable; some soldiers had fought in several campaigns where they marched and fought over 20 miles a day for a 1000 miles. The soldiers were riflemen, who with a light pack containing a small supply of rations that had to last five days, were not stopped by natural obstacles. Yet these soldiers were poorly educated; the majority could neither read nor write. Often soldiers from different parts of China could not communicate for their languages were different. If properly motivated though, these soldiers had excellent morale and were willing to die for their country.

Subject to strict discipline, over seventy percent of the average soldiers were combat veterans. The age group for the soldiers ran from eighteen to thirty-five, but there were no enlistment periods. Generally a soldier left the service only as a cripple or a corpse. To get recruits there was a great deal of social pressure at the village level. Each family normally had to contribute one man for the army. Ideally, once in the army, a soldier was trained for two years prior to being considered qualified. This standard quickly deteriorated once the war began. These troops were psychologically prepared by their leaders for a quick victory over U.S. troops. This was a technique used with success when rallying nervous soldiers to face the inefficient Nationalists; it did not prepare them for the hard fighting against U.S. forces.



These soldiers were supplied with a mish-mash of arms and equipment. Their arms consisted primarily of Japanese and U.S. weapons captured from the Nationalists. In fact U.S. troops often mistook Chinese fire for friendly fire because of the large number of U.S. weapons the Chinese used. These weapons were often in poor condition. Some troops were without weapons and were expected to grab those of a fallen comrade. Armor was almost non-existent with the 3d Field Army having the only large armor/mechanized force. They lacked trucks and an adequate air force. There was little artillery.

The greatest weakness of the Army was its logistics. Although not requiring the volume of supplies that a western army did, the Chinese Army had lived off the country during its wars and the key to its logistic success was the impressment of mass civilian labor. These civilian laborers freed soldiers to go to combat units by hauling supplies and evacuating wounded soldiers to the rear. Moreover, the Chinese still had a primitive supply system, no transport system, poor maintenance, and an appalling lack of doctors. There was only one doctor for each 33,000 troops. These mobile, hardy troops would be committed quickly, but not sustained. Additionally, China's industrial base was not capable of supporting the army's needs; for instance, the munitions industry could not supply nearly enough small arms or artillery shells.

The PLA, 2,650,000 strong in 1950, was organized into five field armies, miscellaneous units, Mongol cavalry, and "occupation" troops. It was supported by a peoples' militia numbering several million. Most of the field armies were associated with military areas. The 1st Field Army, 240,000 strong, was located in North West China. The 2d Field Army, 350,000 strong, was located in the Central Plains. The 3d Field Army, 540,000 strong, was quartered in East China. The 4th Field Army, 450,000, was a Manchurian and Shantung army. The Fifth Field Army was somewhat of a mystery. It was initially believed to be a low-priority field army, but by 1950 the thought was that perhaps it was being built up as a technical, modern organization. The 4th Field Army, commanded by Lin Piao was considered the best, with the 3d Field Army considered the next best. Field Armies were divided into army groups, army groups into armies, armies into divisions. There were 239 divisions in the PLA with an approximate strength of 7,000 each. Each division had three regiments. Because each field army developed independently there was no standard organization or table of equipment. Artillery was organized into divisions and brigades using 75-mm, 122-mm, and 155-mm weapons. Chinese engineers were excellent but had limited heavy equipment. Headquarters elements were austere; i.e., the field army headquarters contained about 240 personnel. On the national level, PLA headquarters was divided into the Political Officer Section, General Staff, and Rear Services. The General Staff had little or no G-4/logistics functions while the semi-independent rear services was composed of supply, ordnance, and health sections. The General Headquarters was ill-organized with logisticians often unaware of strategic plans.



### C. The Korean War

Perhaps the first question to be answered when studying the Korean War is "Why did the North Koreans attack South Korea on 25 June 1950?" To set the stage a little, most experts agree that the U.S.S.R. knew of and gave backing to the North Korean war plans. In fact a number of experts feel that the plan was conceived by the Soviets. One specifies that the plan was drawn up by the Russian General Antonov in the late 1940s. Several indicators of this were the return of the KVC to North Korea in 1949 and 1950, the rapid training and outfitting of the North Koreans in 1949 and 1950, and the redeployment of the Chinese 4th Field Army. As we have seen though, the redeployment of the 4th Field Army and return of the KVC have also been explained as part of China's demobilization plan. (Irregardless, the return of the KVC meant that one-third of the North Korean forces had combat experience.) There is little argument that Russia approved of the attack plans. Viewed in this manner then what were Russian and North Korean aims and why did the attack occur when it did? The North Koreans had the obvious objective to unify Korea under their rule. Soviet aims can only be speculated upon. The most obvious answer is that their only objective was a unified communist Korea. At the time of the invasion U.S. officials were concerned with a number of other possible aims though. These must be examined because U.S. perception of these possible Soviet aims shaped how the war was fought. One alternate explanation for the attack, which caused the U.S. to limit its efforts in Korea and to feel that this war was "the wrong war, in the wrong place, at the wrong time," was that the attack in Korea was a feint to tie down U.S. forces in support of a Soviet main threat in Europe. This theory held that the war was global in orientation not Asiatic. In hindsight, many current scholars feel this was an incorrect theory for the U.S.S.R. and North Korea never signed a mutual defense treaty prior to June 1950 and the USSR did not create other crises during the period. The other concern of U.S. planners was that the attack was a test of U.S. resolve in N.E. Asia which, if unchecked, would encourage the Soviets to attempt world domination. Present day writers say that the primary aim was probably to prevent a Tokyo-Seoul-Washington alliance and to intimidate Japan, to gain a good defensive perimeter for the Soviet Maritime provinces, and to help foster Soviet ambitions for world domination through military force. One such writer feels that the Soviet support was a result of being checked by NATO in Europe. As to the timing of the attack, speculation is that the Soviets saw an opportunity to exploit the recent U.S. withdrawal, South Korean domestic turmoil, and the strategic weakness of the U.S. Far Eastern policy. One opinion says that Soviet planners discounted a U.S. military response based on the weak U.S. forces in the area, and the little money or support previously provided to the South Koreans.

Regardless of the causes, before dawn on 25 June 1950 the North Koreans struck. Within days the U.S. had decided to intervene. Why? This can best be looked at by examining the national purposes, vital interests, objectives, and policy. The U.S. national purpose was to prevent Soviet domination of the U.S. (and the world) through containment and collective security. To achieve this purpose there were a number of perceived vital interests. First, it was vital to avoid another world war. Communism was to be opposed without provoking war. If there was war, it should be limited to avoid overcommitting U.S. forces or provoking Russia. Another vital interest was to prevent the spread of communism. Therefore the U.S. could not appear soft on communism to its allies. In North East Asia this meant Japan, who was coping with Communist agitation and pressure. Another vital interest was to prevent the U.S.S.R. from controlling the entire Eurasian land mass. Since the U.S. supported collective security through the U.N., another vital interest was to prevent the U.N. from losing prestige and becoming ineffective. To achieve these interests there were a number of objectives. One was to deter local Soviet aggressions, or if that failed to stop the aggression and cause the immediate withdrawal of communist forces, as had happened in Iran. Force was to be met with collective Western action. (Based on the West's experience with Hitler's use of negotiation and appeasement, the American public believed that there should be no compromise with dictators, evil should be stamped out. Note that this feeling was in conflict with "containment.")

These objectives led to certain policy decisions. Inaction in the face of aggression was seen as weaknesses which would lead to World War III or at least the weakening of the West, the U.S. and the U.N. Since the U.N. assumed some responsibility for South Korea in 1947, the U.S. sought to garner U.N. support and protection for South Korea. Truman believed that the counter-agent to communism was nationalism, but his policy of fostering nationalist feelings was uneven and often counterproductive. Korea was seen as a test of U.S. resolve; that this was the time to stand up to the communists in North East Asia. When U.S. forces were committed the following assumptions were held: the attack was probably an isolated attack, the U.S. had superior arms, and neither the Soviet Union or China would probably intervene with troops. In short the U.S. committed forces to support its policy of containment, to prevent World War III (a'la Munich), and to "stand up" to the Soviets and bolster our allies.

This intervention was made easier by public, congressional, and media support. When North Korea attacked, the public, press, and Congress supported U.S. intervention as part of the U.N. force, as a way to prevent global war, and they supported the initial U.N. aim of restoring the ante-bellum territories of North and South Korea. In late June letters to the President were running ten to one in favor of intervention. Congress and the press as a whole supported intervention, but leftists and, interestingly enough, arch-conservatives opposed it.

Let us quickly look at the course of the war from 25 June until U.N. forces linked up in the vicinity of the 38th parallel. Before dawn the North Koreans attacked with nine infantry divisions and one armored brigade. The South Koreans, surprised, and with no weapons capable of stopping the onslaught, reeled back. U.S. intelligence was caught by surprise; they had not picked up any indications of the invasion. On 25 June, President Truman authorized supplying the South Koreans with ammunition and military supplies. As the South Koreans fell back, the President authorized 7th fleet forces to secure Kimpo airfield to protect the evacuation of Americans. On the 26th of June the President authorized the use of air and naval power south of the 38th parallel. Upon invasion, the U.S. had brought the matter before the U.N. Security Council where the Russian delegate was absent in protest over the seating of Taiwan. The Security Council had requested an immediate ceasefire and demanded the North Koreans withdraw north of the 38th parallel. On 27 June when there was no response, the U.N. committed forces to "repel the attack and restore the peace." (Remember in 1947, the U.N. supported the principle of a united democratic Korea.) Perhaps in his most significant action on 27 June the President ordered the 7th Fleet into the Formosa Straits to prevent either a Communist invasion of Taiwan or a Nationalist attack on mainland China. Seoul fell 28 June. On 29 June only 25,000 of the 98,000 South Korean troops could be accounted for. General MacArthur requested ground troops, but national leaders, fearing an attack elsewhere did not provide them. On 30 June General MacArthur asked for U.S. ground combat units to prevent the loss of the whole peninsula. Four hours later, Truman authorized U.S. ground combat troops to hold the air base and airfield at Pusan, and he authorized air and naval forces to strike North Korean targets. At the onset of the invasion, China watched the action but provided no support. Chinese papers in June were confident of an early North Korean victory. During July the South Koreans were steadily pushed down the peninsula towards Pusan. As he was retreating, South Korean President Rhee announced that when he counter-attacked he would not stop at the 38th parallel. By the end of July the four U.S. divisions from Japan were in Korea. By 4 August a firm perimeter under General Walker was established at Pusan. As the retreat continued in July, public and congressional frustration began to mount. Congress was pressured into calling up Reserve units. While the public still supported U.N. action in July, it realized the war was going to be longer than expected. The general feeling was that America should mobilize and win the war. The public wanted a quick return to the status quo but they wanted to avoid global war and were not inclined to "stamp out" international communism. However, on June 30, Congressman Lucas spoke of pursuit north of the 38th parallel. For its part, China continued to give "moral" support. During 1-7 July, China supported the Stockholm Peace Proposal, the first of a series of propaganda campaigns to influence world opinion and motivate the Chinese people.

During August there was a radical shift in power. General Walker stabilized the Pusan Perimeter and U.N. strength in the perimeter continued to grow. It was apparent by the end of August that North Korea could win only if China or Russia intervened. Indian efforts to link the seating of Red China in the U.N. with a Korean ceasefire were obviously failing. The position of the U.S. 7th Fleet prevented the invasion of Taiwan and the armies massed opposite Taiwan, the 40th, 38th, 27th, and 39th, moved to the north of Korea and southeast of Peking. On 13 August the Chinese ambassador presented his credentials in Pyongyang. A massive propaganda campaign, "Resist American Invasion of Taiwan and Korea," reflected a quiet anxiety and was an attempt to quiet anti-communist elements in China and prepare the population for mobilization. On 10 August, the U.S. ambassador to the U.N. called for the unification of Korea by U.N. forces. Some analysts feel that during August, China made the decision to go to war in Korea if necessary. They point to the warnings that China was prepared for war, that the Korean war "threatened China's security," and the failure of Russian diplomacy to include China as an "interested party" in discussions. Other experts dispute this view, pointing out the lack of mobilization after General MacArthur's August trip to Taiwan. Also, Chinese statements were not so bellicose as to prevent their participation in negotiations. Moreover, the Chinese did not commit themselves to action publicly in August. U.S. citizens continued to support the intervention, realizing the war might be long, but wanting mobilization with price and wage controls so as to end the war quickly and prevent profiteering.

On 15 September, General MacArthur conducted an audacious amphibious landing at Inchon with his X Corps, consisting of the 1st Marine Division and the 7th U.S.A. infantry division. Although this bold move surprised the North Koreans and cut their lines of communications, it was not to form the anvil on which Walker's 8th Army from Pusan would crush the North Korean Army. General MacArthur had originally wanted to land on each coast, but lack of amphibious shipping prevented this perhaps more effective "anvil" from forming. MacArthur executed the landings in the face of opposition from virtually all his staff and that of the JCS. Moreover, he divided his force in the face of a superior foe, normally a poor tactic. But, he was successful. On 23 September, the 8th Army counterattacked out of the Pusan perimeter. On 24 September the North Koreans broke and by the 26th the Eighth Army advanced 100 miles. The X Corps and 8th Army units linked up on 27 September near Osan. By the last of September, South Korean units were five miles south of the 38th parallel and Seoul was liberated. The North Korean Army was shattered; it had lost 235,000 men (135,000 POWs and 200,000 casualties) and most of its equipment. Officers had deserted their units, and individuals discarded their weapons and began to forage. About 30,000 North Koreans had escaped the U.N. forces and fled north. However, the North Koreans never fought above the corps level again. Both U.N. Ambassador Austin and General MacArthur called for the destruction of North Korea. On 27 September, the JCS asked MacArthur's plans for operations north of the 38th parallel.

The Inchon landing greatly alarmed the Chinese. They watched the North Koreans crumble, their bid for U.N. seating failed, and they were excluded from talks on the war. On 30 September, China stated it would not tolerate the invasion of North Korea. On 3 October Chou En-lai flatly stated that if U.S. forces entered North Korea, China would intervene. State Department officials discounted these warnings as empty threats. Three hundred and twenty thousand Chinese were staged in Manchuria. U.S. citizens thought the war would be over soon.

The next phase of the war to be discussed is from the crossing of the 38th parallel to the initial Chinese intervention in late October and early November. But why did the U.S. cross the 38th parallel and attack into North Korea? As we have seen initial war aims of the U.S. government, the public, and the U.N. were ill-defined. The terms "repell the aggression," "restore the peace," and a "return to the ante bellum" situation were used. All these terms implied a limited war, but the limit of advance was not discussed even though there was a national interest to prevent global war. Opinion polls in the U.S. in July and August stated that Americans did not want to fight beyond the 38th parallel. As allied forces began to stiffen in July and August, Congressmen, the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., General MacArthur and Syngman Rhee began to discuss operations north of the 38th parallel. U.S. national authorities remained vague as to war aims and operations. After the successful Inchon landing, American opinion changed and the feeling was that U.N. forces should move into North Korea, liberate its population, and unite the country. Feeling began to build in the U.N. that the stated 1947 aim of "a unified Korea with democratic processes" should and could be achieved. Also, a feeling both in the U.N. and the U.S. was that to establish credibility for collective action, aggression must be shown not to pay. The Pentagon favored crossing the 38th parallel. Acheson, Rusk, and Allison of the State Department all stated that a crossing of the 38th parallel was not precluded. During these years the State Department espoused the "salami theory" which stated that the Soviets would not go to war if they lost "slices" of communist territory, provided it did not threaten their national interests. On 27 September the JCS in Message #92801 told General MacArthur that he could go north of the 38th parallel and to destroy North Korean forces with airborne and amphibious operations provided that prior to the crossing there was no entry of major Soviet or Chinese forces into the war, nor any announcement of intended entry, or any threats to counter such an operation. The message further stated that if MacArthur attacked northward, only Korean forces were to move up to the Manchurian and U.S.S.R. border and there was to be no naval or air action against Manchuria or the U.S.S.R. Lastly, the message told MacArthur to submit his plans for future operations to the JCS for approval. MacArthur submitted a plan calling for operations north of the 38th parallel on the same day and it was approved on 29 September. Recall that on 3 October Chou En-lai stated that a crossing by U.S. troops would cause China to intervene. On 7 October a U.N. resolution was passed calling for a unified Korea. U.S. policy makers discounted

Chou's warning and stated that Korea was a "slice" (salami theory) of Communist territory that could be retaken without causing Russia and China to intervene. We can safely state that the decision to cross the parallel was supported by the government, military, public, Congress, and the U.N. We can also safely state that JCS guidance to MacArthur gave great latitude of action. In fact, we can find no order given to MacArthur to cross the parallel. The crossing occurred and was approved. Were the aims of the war changed by the fortunes of war and not national interests?

Let's now look at MacArthur's plan for operations in North Korea. In line with JCS guidance of 27 September, General MacArthur established a limit of advance for all non-Korean U.N. forces. This line ran from Chongju on the west through Yongwon to the important part of Hungnam on the east. General MacArthur's plan was for the 8th Army to pass through X Corps north of Seoul and on order attack to the north to seize Pyongyang, the North Korean capital. The X Corps would back load aboard amphibious shipping, sail around Korea, make a landing at Wonsan, then move west to link-up with 8th Army. The object was to trap North Koreans retreating from the south. This plan would establish a port on the west and would place U.S. forces about 100 miles below the border. South Koreans would then drive north to the limit of advance. The zone of action would be separated by the Taebeck mountains. When examined in detail this was an unusual plan.

Why were the 8th Army and X Corps split and given zones of action not mutually supporting? Why was the most unusual structure of two independent commands kept? Why was successful pursuit halted for fourteen days while a passage of lines and amphibious backload were executed? Although General MacArthur has left us no record of the answers to these questions, several of his supporters have left us with some possible explanations. First, by the time the link-up of U.N. forces was accomplished the logistics system was in a precarious position. Most of the supplies were being received from Pusan over roads growing steadily worse with increased use. The road and rail system in the U.N. zone had been destroyed by both U.N. and retreating North Korean forces. It was felt that although Inchon would be able to handle much more traffic shortly, it still could not supply forces on the east coast. It was felt that operations on the east coast were necessary both to trap fleeing North Koreans and act as a pincer force along the Wonsan-Pyongyang corridor. Japan was the logistics base and it could support operations through Wonsan and Inchon easier than through a single port. Likewise the command structure has been justified by stating that, since it was assumed that operations were necessary on the east, the Taebeck mountains provided an impassible barrier and the 8th Army couldn't control X Corps anyway. It was felt that GHQ in Japan could control 8th Army and X Corps with less problems. Later, all MacArthur's advisors stated that they felt X Corps should have been under 8th Army. As to why a successful pursuit was halted, only General MacArthur could explain that and he never did. If logistics was the concern, this plan was not the best, for it meant that no supplies could be landed at Inchon while the

ten-day backload proceeded. General Walker and his G-3 Colonel Dabney later stated that they had a plan in which the X Corps would have continued its pursuit towards Pyongyang with 8th Army in trace. Then either 8th Army or X Corps would have moved east to seize Wonsan. Colonel Dabney has stated he felt the plan was logistically supportable and would have saved time. It is noted that General MacArthur stated he had been presented with neither General Walker's plan nor had heard of his staff's misgivings on the command structure. Two malfunctions were probably operative: the failure of MacArthur's staff to present these misgivings and the General's weaknesses for not discussing future operations with his field commanders. Whatever the rationale, a pursuit was stopped for fourteen days giving the North Koreans a chance to reconstitute.

That was the plan, but how was it executed? On 4 October General MacArthur moved the limit of U.N. (non-Korean) advance northward to the Sonchon-Songgin line, still thirty to forty miles below the Manchurian border and within JCS guidance of 27 September. National command authority approved with silence. On 7 October the first U.S. troops crossed the parallel. These were 8th Army forces and they began a drive towards Pyongyang. On the 9th of October, the JCS sent a cryptic message to General MacArthur stating that U.S. forces might engage Chinese forces as long as there was a reasonable chance of success. Also on the 9th, the 1st Marine Division began backload at Inchon and by 16 October the loading of X Corps assault elements was complete. The X Corps plans called for the Marine Division to seize a base of operations at Wonsan while 7th division would attack west to link-up with 8th Army near Pyongyang. Syngman Rhee had stated, on 19 September, that South Korean forces would not stop at the 38th parallel and would "advance as far as the Manchurian border until not a single enemy soldier is left in our country." As good as his word, the South Koreans had not halted their advance, crossing the 38th parallel on the 2nd of October. The South Koreans then began a remarkable, relentless pursuit of the North Koreans, ROK II Corps seized Pyongyang, fifty air miles north of Seoul on 11 October. On the west coast the advance of the ROK I Corps was spectacular. Averaging fifteen miles a day on bare feet, these troops had seized Wonsan, 110 air miles north of Seoul, by 11 October. In mid-October President Truman and General MacArthur conferred on Wake Island. In light of subsequent events, this conference and its purposes are now controversial subjects in themselves. General MacArthur felt he was given guidance which conformed to his plans; President Truman felt MacArthur understood what Truman desired. Later events proved these were misconceptions. By now U.N. troops had reached the limit of advance prescribed in the JCS 27 September message.

But what about the Chinese? Communist rhetoric had been increasing its condemnation of the U.S. since the Inchon landing with apparent purpose of readying its population for war. On 12-16 October Chinese forces began crossing the border into North Korea. On 24 October General MacArthur unilaterally moved the limit of advance to the Manchurian, Soviet border.



He ordered U.N. forces to occupy all of Korea. The JCS challenged MacArthur, but in an ensuing, confusing "battle of the telegrams," the General backed them down. Here we have a theatre general making decisions for the U.S. and the U.N., and his superiors are allowing it. In the meantime 8th Army forces had continued their drive and secured Pyongyang by the 21st of October and were north of the Chongchon River. On 26 October, the first South Korean units of ROK II Corps reached the Manchurian border (the Yalu River), and were attacked and decimated by Chinese forces.

We need to shift our attention to the X Corps who had loaded out on 16 October. With Wonsan secured on 11 October and the landing held up for a number of days by mines in the harbor, General Almond, commander of X Corps, changed his plans. The I ROK Corps was to advance along the east coastal roads to the border. The 1st Marine Division was to land at Wonsan and send the 7th Marine Regiment northwest to the Chosin Reservoir in order to relieve the 3d ROK Division for its northward drive. The regiment was then to insure the Chosin-Hungnam corridor stayed operational. The Division's 5th Regiment was to secure Wonsan while the 1st Regiment was to secure the towns of Kojo to the south and Majon-ni to the west. The 7th Infantry Division was to land at Iwon, move north to Pukchong, and then attack north to seize Hyeson on the Yalu River. The 3d U.S.A. Infantry Division was to land, relieve the Marines, and secure the Wonsan-Hungnam area. Then, the 1st Marine Division was to gather near the Chosin Reservoir and be prepared to attack north to the border. The Marines zone of action for this border drive was to be 300 miles long and 50 miles wide. On 26 October the Marines began an unopposed landing at Wonsan. The Marine Division Commander, Oliver Smith was extremely uneasy. Initially, his division was to be fragmented over 130 airmiles of mountainous terrain in enemy territory with little support available from other forces.

During the later part of October, Chinese divisions and armies continued to pour into Korea but were not detected by U.N. forces. Part of the reason was a poor intelligence collection capability and the ability of the Chinese to move at night, maintaining excellent camouflage in the day. Equally important was the tendency of General MacArthur and his staff to discount the possibility of massive Chinese intervention or to be unconcerned about it. This will be discussed later.

On 29 October the 7th Division began landing. By 1 November the 7th Division was disposed as follows: 17th Infantry was at Pungsan, 31st Infantry was to the left of the 17th with their left boundary being Pujon Reservoir. The plan was to move the 17th Infantry to Hyeson on the Yalu, move 31st Infantry on the 17th's left flank to the Yalu, and have the 32d Infantry remain on the southeast shore of the Pujon Reservoir.

In the 8th Army's zone the Chinese had destroyed the 6th ROK Division of ROK II Corps and had driven the Koreans back to Kunu-ri on the Chongchon River by 31 October. American forces had been driven back to the



Chongchon River further to the west both by direct Chinese attacks and for fear of having their right flank rolled up by a collapse of the II ROK Corps.

On 1 November in X Corps zone, 17th Infantry was on the road to Hyeson and the Marine Division was scattered with the 7th Marines located at Sudong, on the way to Chosin Reservoir. On that day the Chinese hit the Marines hard. The Chinese had moved into the gap between the 8th Army and X Corps but had attacked the flanks and attempted to roll them up rather than penetrate. Fighting raged in both zones of action for the next six days. On 5 November General MacArthur accused China of direct intervention which she acknowledged, and on 6 November U.N. forces bombed the Korean end of the bridges over the Yalu River. On 6-10 November the Chinese withdrew, literally disappeared into the mountains. They appeared unexpectedly, hit hard, then left. General MacArthur claimed they were beaten. Other explanations are that they wanted to see what U.N. reaction would be prior to full employment of their forces, that they were administering a "lesson" to U.N. forces and that if U.N. forces had halted or withdrawn the Chinese wouldn't have attacked later, that the Chinese wanted to probe U.N. defenses and get a feel for the U.N. forces' abilities, or that the attacks were an effort to lure the U.N. forces further into a trap. We don't know, maybe elements of all these theories were applicable. This question begs the larger question though, which is "Why did the Chinese intervene in the first place?"

The first explanation has been viewed as the "Chinese component." That is, the intervention was motivated by nationalist aspirations. China, as we saw protected itself traditionally with a layer of buffer, vassal states. China traditionally felt she had a "mandate from heaven" to protect her frontiers through dominating neighboring states. The intervention may have been an attempt to reassert her dominance over Korea, prevent the rearming of Japan and a U.S.-Japanese alliance, and to influence the rest of Asia. A determined response would expose the weakness of the U.S. and show the worthlessness of U.S. "protection." An intervention would also help redress past injustices at the hands of foreign powers. China especially resented the aid provided by the U.S. to the Nationalists in the civil war. After being "carved up" once by foreign powers, China was determined not to let it happen again. Possibly, the Chinese wanted to remove perceived inferior international status; i.e., "unequal" World War II ally, no seat in the U.N., prevented from controlling Taiwan, traditional Chinese territory, and failure to be included in Korean negotiations as an interested party. China desired to be a power broker in Asia, but she couldn't aspire to leadership so long as she appeared unwilling or unable to influence events on her border. China felt she risked losses of prestige and power through inaction. If she could defeat the most powerful nation in the world, other nations would respect her.

Another factor in the intervention might have been the ideological one. As true Marxist-Leninists the Chinese were dedicated to spreading communism worldwide. It was necessary to destroy capitalism. It appears from reading Chinese statements that in this instance China abandoned her "barbarian" policy and felt the Soviets were partners and true friends. To preserve an established communist regime the Chinese were ready to risk a general or nuclear war. Therefore, there was a moral necessity (since there was no defense treaty with North Korea) to help. If China sought to be the leader of the national liberation movement in Asia, she must demonstrate her resolve. By intervening and winning China would prove that the Maoist strategy was a valid model for Asian revolution. Also, a victory would physically extend the intent of communist influence.

Another factor might be labeled the "experience" component. As noted before, the Chinese leaders had been isolated in China with the Soviet point of view their only reference point for twenty years. None of the leaders of China had been outside the country for over twenty years except Mao's one visit to Russia in early 1950. Their perceptions of the world were extremely simplistic and they viewed the U.S. as their greatest threat.

Another reason for the intervention may have been a genuine fear for the security of the nation. The Chinese may have feared that a U.S. victory might awaken U.S. and Nationalist sentiments; for there were still hundreds of thousands of "bad elements" in China. An intervention would possibly deter U.S. sponsored attacks by the Nationalists. Chiang had offered troops early in the war and was turned down by the U.S. But who could predict the U.S.'s next move? The Chinese may have feared the war would spill over into Manchuria and planned to prevent this by an aggressive defense. The idea of a hostile power on their border may have been unacceptable to them and they wanted some type of buffer between themselves and an American presence. Developing this theory, it is interesting to note that the Chinese were always quite explicit when threatening intervention, that only U.N. forces were prohibited from crossing the 38th parallel. When the Chinese initially intervened they were always quite careful to label their soldiers as "volunteers." Also, the Chinese crossed the border in mid-October but did not attack till 25 October, and after an initial blow disengaged for almost three weeks. Some writers speculate that the above actions indicate that as late as early November the Chinese may have been agreeable to some type of communist North Korean state with a much reduced territory.

Prior to the intervention, many U.S. leaders were convinced that China's increasing war-like actions reflected their concern for the hydroelectric stations on the Yalu and the industry of Manchuria. In light of the fact that China began to prepare its people for a general war, even a nuclear war, as early as August and September, and that the Chinese really had no idea of what U.N. response to intervention would be, this theory seems flawed.

Another factor in the commitment may have been several miscalculations on the part of the Chinese. Due to their limited contact with the world and their xenophobia, the Chinese probably overestimated the U.S. threat to themselves. They couldn't comprehend the proper frame of reference. Their leaders did not understand that in a democracy national figures would call for the atom bombing of China, but that those statements were not reflective of national policy. The Chinese also probably overestimated U.S. vulnerabilities. They felt the inadequate road system would make it easy to stall and destroy mechanized columns, but they didn't realize the value of close air support. After action reports of the early November action reveal they were not impressed with the ability of U.N. infantry in close combat, they overlooked the awesome firepower U.N. forces had at their disposal. Conditioned by their experiences they were unprepared for the fire power of the U.N. forces.

We have touched on the next topic before, "When did the Chinese decide to intervene?" The best guess is early August. At this time supposedly a decision was made to use military force, vice political maneuvering, if necessary. The basis for this decision is an examination of the statement of Chinese leaders, of the propaganda campaigns conducted, and of the preparations of the army for combat. An argument that they planned to intervene before the war started is supported by the deployment of the 4th Field Army in 1950, but weakened by the facts that China and Korea had no mutual defense treaty, legal justification for intervention, and that the U.S.S.R. had not equipped Chinese forces prior to the outbreak of war. Some slight argument can be made that the decision was made later than August because of Russian pressure. The basis for this argument is the logistical condition of some of the units committed, particularly in X Corps' zone.

Let us focus our attention on 6-25 November 1950, the three weeks leading to the Chinese onslaught. After the initial Chinese attacks we have the 8th Army in defensive positions along the Chongchon River with the ROK II Corps on their right flank. In the west the 1st Marine Division is scattered on the left flank of X Corps, 7th Division is also scattered but the lead regiment is driving toward the Yalu in the center, and ROK I Corps is still pursuing up the eastern coast. Concern was high over the Chinese actions. The JCS suggested that the advance be halted at the Chongyin-Hungnam line. However, the JCS deferred to the State Department in the matter, feeling it was a political not a military decision. The Chairman of the JCS, Marshall, did not want to meddle in MacArthur's command and so the JCS made no move to stop the drive north. At the State Department there was also concern over the Chinese and a drive to the Yalu wasn't deemed a political necessity. However, in an extraordinary example of poor coordination and staff work, neither the Pentagon nor the Department of State advised the President of their misgivings. After the Chinese pullback, General MacArthur estimated that there were 100,000 enemy to his front and 40,000 guerrillas behind his lines. To destroy these he had about 100,000 front line combat troops out of a total of 377,000 in the U.N.

command. About 200,000 of U.N. forces were still in South Korea. One hundred and eighty-eight thousand combat service support troops were strung out from Pusan to the Yalu. Neither was his attack ratio favorable nor was his estimate correct. Nevertheless, proclaiming the North Koreans defeated and the Chinese repulsed, he made plans to continue the attack on both zones.

In the X Corps, the orders were for the ROK I Corps, 7th Division, and 1st Marine Division to attack north to the border. A week later this order was modified for the 1st Marine Division. Instead of going due north it was to move to Yudam-ni, go west on 27 November to link-up with the 8th Army at Map'yong, and then to attack to Manpo on the Yalu via Kanggye. The purpose of this maneuver would be to reduce the thirty to fifty mile gap between the 8th Army and X Corps and to cut the Chinese supply line. 3d Division would deal with guerrillas in rear areas. This plan meant that X Corps would have three divisional columns, none of which could support another.

As the 3d Division landed it began to relieve the 1st and 5th Marine Regiments of security duties in the Wonsan-Hungnam area. On 11 November the North Korean winter struck. Temperatures plummeted and winds howled, shocking the Americans. By now the Marine Commanders were very uneasy. If General Smith was concerned over the poor disposition of U.N. forces prior to the initial Chinese attack and the onset of winter, he was now extremely troubled.

On 10 November the 7th Marines had reached Koto-ri as head of the Division. By the 15th of November, the 7th Marines were in Hagaru-ri. During this and subsequent movement the Marines deliberately slowed their pace to concentrate their division and insure the only MSR was secure and well constructed. They averaged only a mile per day from 10-23 November against virtually no opposition. On the 25th, X Corps told the Marines to execute their westward movement on the 27th to link-up with 8th Army. By 27 November the 5th and 7th Regiments were at Yadomni and the 1st Regiment defended Hagaru, Koto-ri, and Chinhung-ni with a battalion each. By the 21st of November the 17th Infantry had reached the Yalu at Hyesan and on 26 November Chongjin had fallen to the ROK I Corps and they were preparing to move northwest to Hoeryong on the Manchurian border. All of North Korea to the west and northwest of X Corps was in enemy hands. There was a twenty mile gap from the northern most flank of the 8th Army, and in the southern part of the zone the gap was thirty-five miles. These gaps were not patrolled.

In the west things were not going well. After General MacArthur ordered an offensive to the Yalu to end the war, 8th Army and ROK II Corps had jumped off in the attack on 24 November. The going was slow and on 26 November, these forces were struck a massive Chinese blow. The ROK II Corps on the right flank was rolled back and the U.N. front began to fall back, further widening the gap between the 8th Army and X Corps.

What of the Chinese plans during this period? During the lull in fighting, 7-26 November, the Chinese positioned their forces to envelop and turn the 8th Army right flank, the ROK II Corps, and X Corps left flank, the 1st Marine Division. POWs later stated that the specific plan was to lure two regiments of the division into the area where the Chinese were massed, then cut them off and destroy the Division in detail.

The last question we must answer was why wasn't the massive build-up of Chinese forces detected after their initial withdrawal? As touched on earlier, General MacArthur refused to believe that the Chinese were massively committed to Korea regardless of the earlier action, POW reports, and the misgivings of several of his subordinates, especially the Marine Commander, General Smith. General MacArthur was also complacent, for he felt that if the Chinese intervened short of the Yalu, which was a possibility; he could defeat them with airpower. The intelligence section did poor collection and analysis while the ground commanders made poor assessments. The 8th Army made poor use of POW reports, choosing not to believe Chinese forces were in the area. Intelligence collectors revealed no Chinese, but resources were scarce. The Chinese were masters of night movement and daylight camouflage to avoid detection by aerial reconnaissance, the primary means of intelligence collection. The X Corps also missed the Chinese and on 21 November intelligence summary estimated that there were 45,000 to Chinese in all of Korea; there were 300,000 with 180,000 poised to strike 8th Army and 120,000 ready to hit X Corps. Washington couldn't decide if the Chinese would intervene or not. At any rate, they did not publish any estimate different from General MacArthur's. There is no evidence that the CIA or other strategic assets presented an estimate to the President. In effect, MacArthur's Far Eastern Command intelligence estimates were driving the course of the war.

Let us now look at a snap shot of 27 November 1950. The North Koreans have attacked to unify North Korea, expand communist influence, and to prevent a Seoul-U.S.-Tokyo alliance, but they did not expect the U.S. to respond militarily. The U.S. has intervened to contain communism, support the U.N., prevent World War III, and to show our resolve; i.e., back up our allies, but didn't expect the U.S.S.R. or China to intervene. After a long retreat, the tables have been turned at Inchon and U.N. forces are deep in North Korea. Moreover the U.S./U.N. war aims have changed from repelling aggression and liberating South Korean territory to destroying North Korean forces and uniting Korea under Western leaders. In an unusual plan, General MacArthur has split his forces, and the X Corps is fragmented in its zone of action. Three hundred thousand Chinese have slipped into North Korea virtually undetected. As the sun goes down on the 27th of November, the stage is set. Marine forces are in defensive positions around the Chosin Reservoir and over 100,000 Chinese are poised to strike.

### III. The Tactical Situation

#### A. The Area of Operations

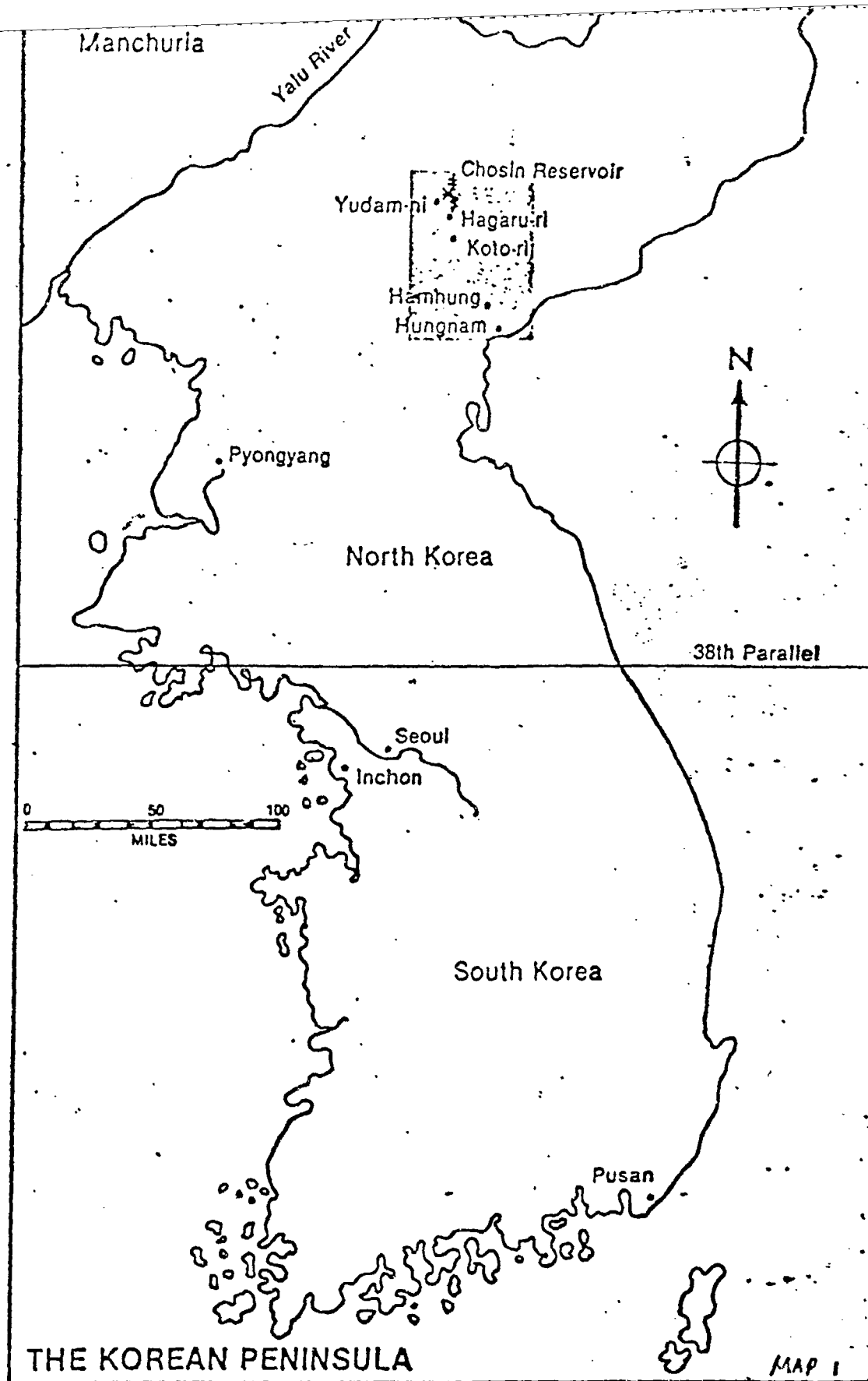
##### 1. Climate and Weather

Although the mountainous interior of northern Korea is a region of relatively high precipitation, the period from October through March is the dry season. Much of the winter precipitation falls as snow, but the total amount is small. The accumulation of snow on the ground seldom exceeds one foot except in the northern mountain valleys where the depth is increased by local drifting. The best sky conditions for aerial operations prevail in winter when cloud cover averages .2 for seventy percent of the time in the interior. Days with cloudless skies are not uncommon in the north, and relatively clear skies may last for several days. Visibility is also affected by radiation fogs. These form in the protected localities of the interior during calms or very light winds usually late at night or in the early morning. Such fogs disappear by about 1000. Winters in the North Korean Highlands are severe, with mean minimum temperatures generally below zero degrees Fahrenheit. Extreme minimum temperatures are thirty to forty degrees below zero. In the north-central tip of Korea, at Chunggangjin on the Yalu River, the minimum temperature may be expected to fall below zero on about seventy-five days between late November and early March.<sup>5</sup>

##### 2. Terrain (See Map 1)

Northern Korea, which holds the industrial section that is largely dependent on the south for its food, shows stands of tall evergreens upon its steep mountains, where sheer granite cliffs sometimes drop off from 6000 foot ridges. And the country as a whole, viewed from the air, or while walking in peace among its hills or on its seashores, seem especially blessed with beauty. When the summer fades, the foothills of the spinal range where hardwood trees grown in some profusion turn gold, and yellow, and all the breathtaking shades of red and brown. The skies are often a bottomless blue and the seas on either side of the peninsula stretch out deep and clean.

The far north, however, offers a more forbidding prospect, particularly in the winter when storms that make up in the distant Manchurian wastes scream down unheralded and lay ten-foot drifts on the mountains. In this section, as the mountain ranges reach toward the Yalu River, the country is truly divided so that it is impossible for an army to maintain a solid front, or even liaison, across the trackless and impassable summit ridges. Throughout the country roads are sinuous and far between. The highlands are traced largely by footpaths where men or ponies must go one after one. The forests here offer excellent cover to an enemy on foot, while the innumerable narrow valleys, the painfully straitened and scanty roads, and the knife-like ridges stall every movement of a heavily



mechanized army that dares not take to the trackless hills. Without armor, with little artillery, unencumbered by complex communications, lightly equipped and carrying hand weapons only the Chinese armies, which were all inured to the extremes of weather and the scantiness of food, superbly disciplined and thoroughly trained, found choice opportunities here for maneuver and concealment.

The Yangnim Range, between the Chosin Reservoir and the Yalu River, is one of the highest and most inaccessible parts of the North Korean Ranges, with elevations of 7,000 to 8,000 feet. These rugged mountains are drained by fast flowing streams in steep-sided valleys or gorges. Valleys are generally forested and mountain sides are covered with grass or forests with the timberline extending up to 7,500 feet on some peaks. The region is sparsely settled; only two or three roads traverse it, and no railroad crosses it completely. Considering the X Corps mission, critical terrain features in the area included the communications centers of Changjin, Angganggu, Singalpajin, Hyesanjin, and the approaches to these areas. Avenues of approach from the line of contact to these critical terrain features were extremely limited due to the rugged terrain and the paucity of even "fair" roads. The virtual impossibility of cross-country movement required that the principal roads be augmented, as routes, by the use of all available trails and secondary roads.

This was and is still a very hostile environment in which to wage war. The reservoir lay at an elevation of 1070 meters within rugged mountain terrain. Peaks in the area rose to elevations of 1200 to 1800 meters. From Hagaru-ri, at the southern end of the reservoir a dirt road ran along the eastern shore. It was barely wide enough for the passage of trucks. The terrain sloped steeply up from the reservoir and was cut by numerous stream lines forming cross-compartments. The road ran around the larger inlets and crossed the smaller ones on narrow wooden bridges. The one concrete bridge at Sasu-ri had been destroyed but the stream could be forded just below the bridge site. A narrow gauge railroad followed the shoreline to the Pungnyuri River, crossing the small streams on unfloored wooden trestles. Another road led inland to the west from Hagaru-ri through Toktong Pass and north to Yudam-ni. There the road branched. One branch led west to Mupyong. The other branch continued north and met the road running along the eastern shore at the northern tip of the Chosin Reservoir. The main supply route to the area was from Hungnam to Hagaru-ri, a distance of 102 kilometers. Leaving Hungnam, the first half of the distance was two lane road passing through relatively level terrain. This changed to rolling country for another twenty kilometers and north of Sangtong began a steep and curving climb to Funchilin Pass. In the next twelve kilometers the road climbed 800 meters along a shelf cut into the cliffs. In this area trucks could pass only at selected locations. A narrow gauge railway also ran through the pass, paralleling the road from Koto-ri to Hagaru-ri. Maintenance of the road from Hamhung to Hagaru-ri required the work of two Army engineer battalions to keep it open and



provide their own security.

B. Comparing the Opposing Forces to Ascertain Their Combat Effectiveness-U.S. Forces

1. Strength and Composition

First Marine division mustered about 25,000 personnel, mostly Marines but also several hundred Navy doctors and corpsmen.

The main strength of the division was provided by its three infantry regiments, the 1st, 5th, and 7th Marine Regiments. Each of these regiments mustered three 1,000-man rifle battalions, a 4.2-inch heavy mortar company, an antitank company, and a headquarters and service (H&S) company. In all, the average regiment--and each differed slightly from the others--mustered about 3,500 officers and men.

The three rifle battalions of each infantry regiment (a total of nine in the division) deployed three rifle companies, one weapons company, and one H&S company.

Each rifle company consisted of three rifle platoons, one .30-caliber aircooled light machinegun platoon, and one mortar section of three 60-mm mortars. The rifle platoons each mustered about forty-five men divided into three thirteen-man squads (further divided into three four-man fire teams plus squad leader) and a platoon headquarters team, including platoon leader, platoon sergeant, guide, runner, radioman, and corpsman. The battalion weapons company deployed three heavy machinegun platoons of six .30-caliber water-cooled heavy machineguns each, and an 81-mm mortar platoon of three two-gun sections. The battalion H&S company incorporated the battalion staff officers and their enlisted clerks and technicians, a communications platoon, a motor pool, the Navy medical team attached to the battalion, and several supporting arms liaison teams, such as forward air controllers and artillery forward observers.

The division's fourth regiment, the 11th Marines, was the artillery regiment. It deployed three eighteen-gun 105-mm howitzer battalions of three six-gun batteries each and an eighteen-gun 155-mm howitzer battalion (the 4th Battalion). Each of the three 105-mm battalions was assigned to the operational control of an infantry regiment, and the battalion commander of each artillery battalion doubled as the artillery adviser on the staff of the infantry regiment commander. The 155-mm battalion was a divisional support unit, and was technically under the direct control of the division commander, though it was not uncommon for 155-mm batteries, or even the entire battalion, to be placed under the operational control of subordinate headquarters.

All of the dozen-odd support and service battalions that served as organic parts of the division were under the nominal command of the division commander, though he had a senior colonel on his staff to oversee their performance. Because the Marine division was built for an amphibious role, several specialized support battalions (the amphibious tractor and shore-party battalions) were not employed in the mountain fighting. In a campaign to which the division was better suited the various companies of most of the support and service battalions were generally assigned, one apiece, to the infantry regiments; and one platoon of each of those companies was assigned to each of the rifle battalions; this configuration yielded what were known as regimental combat teams comprised of battalion landing teams.

The overriding characteristic of the organization, as amply demonstrated in the incessant and distressing actions of the two-week period in November-December 1950, was its flexibility. Whatever troops, weapons, and equipment the division or its components had on hand could be used in the most flexible configurations imaginable, depending upon the needs of the moment.

While such ideals hardly ever work out in real life, it was the aim of the training programs by which Marines were indoctrinated that every man be basically interchangeable with every other man of the same rank, irrespective of specialty. At the heart of the training program was the drive to make each and every Marine a rifleman. In that respect given the exigencies of this campaign, the training paid dividends far beyond even the loftiest ideals and expectations.

Most of the officers and a great many of the enlisted men had been bloodied in World War II. They knew precisely how to wage the war they waged; they had proved that again at Inchon in September. Admiral Doyle, Commander of Naval forces, described the 1st Marine Division's performance as follows:

" . . . It is my conviction that the successful assault on Inchon could have been accomplished only by the United States Marines. This conviction, I am certain, is shared by everyone who planned, executed or witnessed the assault. My statement is not to be construed as a comparison of the fighting qualities of various units of our armed forces. It simply means that because of their many years of specialized training in amphibious warfare, in conjunction with the Navy, only the U.S. Marines had the requisite know-how to formulate these plans within the limited time available and to execute these plans flawlessly without additional training or rehearsal..."

The Marines were combat ready.

Superb air support, of all kinds, moreover, helped immeasurably to see the 5th and 7th through to Hagaru. Until 2 December the 5th Air Force was nominally in control, but after that date the 1st Marine Air Wing was given responsibility for providing close air support to X Corps. The three squadrons of MAG 12 were then operating from Wonsan, while MAG 33 had two squadrons at Yonpo and one on a CVE carrier. Squadrons were shifted about frequently during the following week, but the 1st Marine Air Wing remained in control until 11 December.

Navy planes from carriers of Task Force 77 also took an active part in maintaining air support which was exceptional both in quality and quantity. Between 1 and 11 December the Marines alone flew 1730 sorties, averaging about 123 a day. Meanwhile the planes of the 5th Air Force flew interdiction missions beyond a bomb line approximately five miles on either side of the MSR. U.S. air supremacy was a major factor in turning the tide of battle in the favor of the Marines.

## 2. Technology

The Marines had the advantage in weaponry, particularly in the use of field artillery and close air support. The CCF had very little of either of the former and none of the latter. The CCF also suffered from the use of weapons produced by Russians, English, Americans, and Japanese. This confusing multiplicity of weapons made for great difficulties for an already very poor supply system.

One factor which affected both sides at Chosin was the weather, and specifically the effects under extreme cold conditions. Before briefly describing the effect on some of the USMC equipment it must be understood that the salient note in the whole record of in-fighting during the campaign was found in the promptness and strength with which all supporting weapons were brought to bear in the decisive area of engagement whenever any part of the rifle line came under pressure by direct assault. The curtain of fire--all the mortars, the artillery, and sometimes part of the armor joining--was dropped down across the portal of the defending front. Thereby the attack was kept canalized and the CCF assault wave was denied immediate strong support.

Under sub-zero conditions the performance of the M1, the machineguns, and the 75-mm recoilless, was sturdy, and in general, highly satisfactory. Praise for the latter weapon was universal among 1st Marine Division battalions. They used it against bunkers and other gun positions, it was effective up to 1,200 yards. The unanimous comment on the weapon was that "we need more of the same."

In the sub-zero fighting, the 105-mm howitzer would sometimes take two minutes to move back into position, thus markedly slowing the rate of fire.

There was considerable variation in the report on the BAR in which variation may reflect differences in matters of maintenance under cold conditions. Battalions used no oil, washed the guns in gasoline to clean them of all oil, fired them periodically to keep the weapon warm, and experienced no difficulty. On the other hand, there were companies within the division which used a light coating of oil, did not fire warm-ups, and still found the weapon working well from first to last. On the average, however, BAR performance was good, and the weapon retained the confidence of its users.

The carbine did not have the confidence of divisions commanders or line. The universal comment was that when the weapon was changed to include automatic features, it became "too delicate." The optimum performance by any line company showed about thirty percent failure on the part of the carbine. Troops discarded the weapons as rapidly as they could get hold of M1s.

In general, the fire performance by the family of mortars was highly satisfactory in division battalions, with a number of these expressing special appreciation for the 4.2. However, the mortars in all sizes, when subjected to high rates of fire, tended to beat themselves to death against the frozen ground. The seat of greatest difficulty was in the base plates which buckled from corner to corner, or cracked, or broke apart. But there was also trouble with the elevating screws which shook loose in the cold and then eroded rapidly. The data also showed that firing pins broke so excessively that ordnance battalions had to resort to making them on the spot. The 4.2 stood up better than the lighter mortars in these respects. As to tubes, none blew up, but the armorers noted that one effect of the cold seemed to be deeper scoring by the fins, resulting in excessive muzzle flash.

Ammunition for the 3.5 rocket launcher cracked wide open on the coldest days. Thus this weapon was practically useless to the Marines.

Major General Smith noted that the helicopter lost some of its hovering characteristics in the cold, thin air, and tended to land with a hard bump, dropping the last ten feet. Also, during the air drops, bundles tore away from their chutes before the silk could open in a high percentage of cases, perhaps one in ten.

### 3. Logistics

Logistical support was a major problem on both sides. Logistical support to 1st Marine Division was limited because the CCF kept interdicting the only MSR used for ground supply of the Marines. The breakout of the division owed in large measure to a daily schedule of airborne supply and evacuation of casualties. It also owed to a Marine command which had provided a reserve, while the MSR was still open, of two units of fire (two days of ammunition) and six days' rations at Hagaru. For this was the margin of safety which proved to be necessary on several occasions when airdrops were not sufficient. (See Maps 2A/2B.)

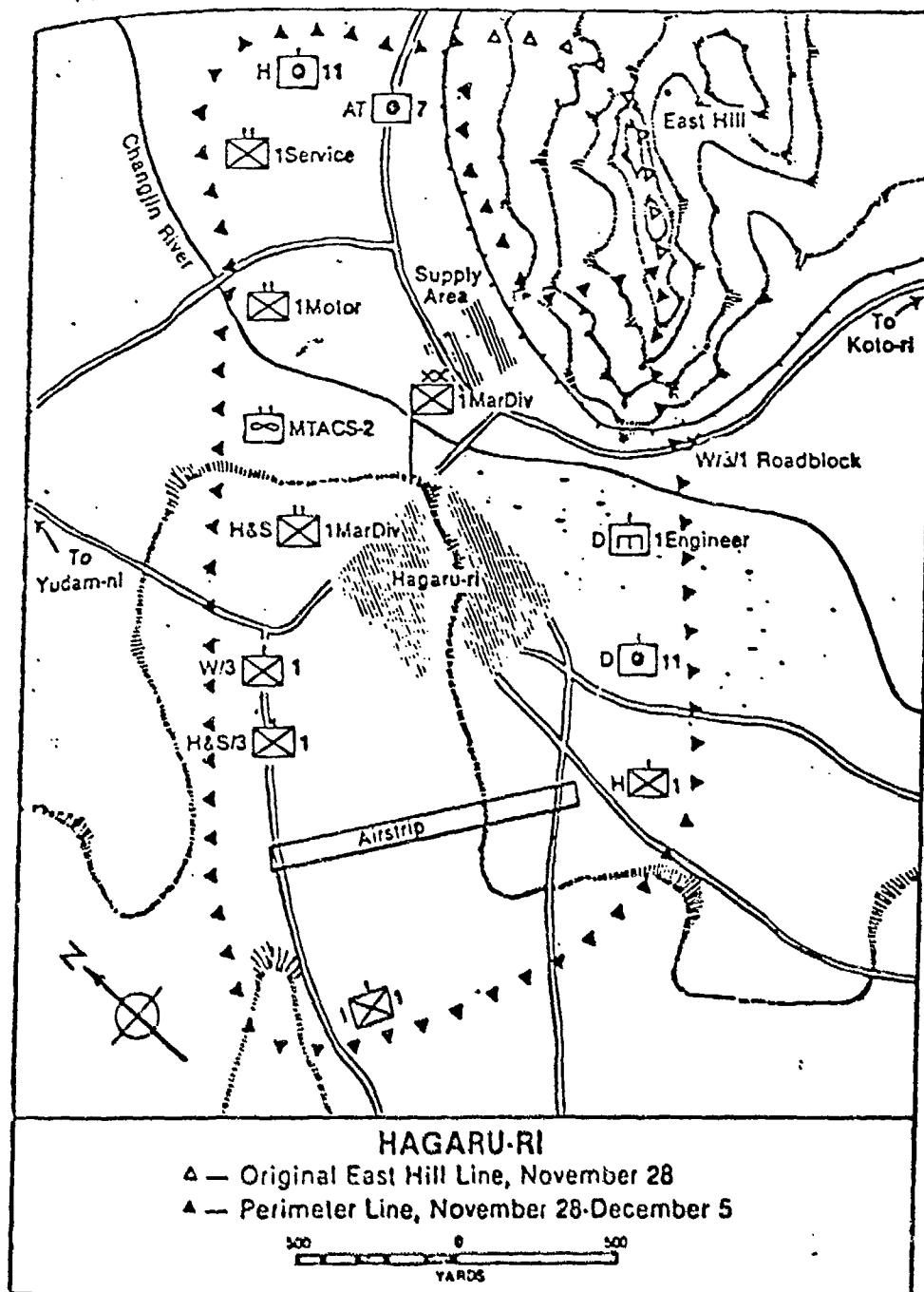
Hagaru-ri was chosen as the forward supply point for all classes of supplies in support of the attack from the Chosin Reservoir area. The estimate of supplies delivered at Hagaru-ri to support the 1st Marine Division and elements of the 7th Division called for 1,000 tons, all classes, per day. This tonnage had to be moved over one narrow mountainous road approximately forty-eight miles long and one narrow gauge railroad, with an estimated capacity of 300-400 tons per day. During the period prior to 27 November, the Marines established their supply point at Hagaru-ri, using their 1st Motor Transport Battalion and 7th Motor Transport Battalion(-), two companies of which were utilized by the Combat Service Group, FMF, on port clearance at Hungnam. In the event conditions became such that overland transportation of supplies could not completely support all units, an emergency air support plan was devised. The plan contemplated the air drop of supplies and equipment to isolated units and to the division supply point at Hagaru-ri if necessary. The C-119 aircraft were to be used to lift supplies from Ashiya Air Base in Japan for drop to units in zones designated by X Corps. The air support also included the employment of C-47 aircraft stationed at Yonpo airfield to airdrop supplies to units and to airland them at Hagaru-ri when the field became operational. Planes returning from the field at Hagaru-ri were to evacuate casualties.

Engineers constructed a C-47 airstrip at Koto-ri while under enemy fire. The 1st Marine Division Engineer Battalion was also subjected to frequent small arms fire during the construction of a C-47 airstrip at Hagaru-ri. In spite of the enemy fire and the difficulty of leveling and surfacing the frozen ground, the first C-47 landed on the airstrip the afternoon of 1 December. Thereafter, this strip was used to airland supplies and to evacuate casualties. (See Map 3.)

Many bridges destroyed by enemy action were repaired or reconstructed. One of these was the replacing of a complete M-2 steel treadway bridge near the reservoir area in order to allow the 1st Marine Division to continue its withdrawal. The position of the bridge made it impossible to construct a bypass and there was no material immediately

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(See endpapers for GUIDE TO MAP SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS.)

MAP 3

available to span the gap. This obstacle was surmounted by a successful airdrop of eight sections of an M-2 steel treadway bridge and its installation by personnel of the engineer battalion and the 58th Treadway Bridge Company.

When the MSR was cut between Hamhung and Hagaru-ri on 28 November the problem of logistical support of approximately 25,000 troops became critical. The only means of evacuating casualties from units north of Hagaru-ri was to transfer them to liaison aircraft for the flight to the airstrip at Hamhung. The situation was alleviated by opening of the airstrip to C-47 planes on 1 December.

Thus the tactical situation required the emergency air support plan to be placed in effect at the outset of the operation. On 28 November ammunition was dropped to the 7th Marine Regiment. The total amount dropped to the Regiment was 24.6 tons in ten C-47 sorties. From then until the end of the period, air supply and evacuation proved a major factor in the successful withdrawal operations.

#### 4. Command and Control

Good command and control is essential to any military operation. General Douglas MacArthur was the Commander in Chief of the Far East Command and all UN forces in Korea. Lieutenant General Edward Almond was the CG of X Corps which was under the direct control of General MacArthur. General Almond's X Corps was on the eastern side of the peninsula and was separated from Walker's Eighth Army by the treacherous Taebaek Mountain range, which runs like a gigantic spinal column down east central Korea. It was the presence of this all but impenetrable range which had persuaded MacArthur that the two commands could function independently of each other in their respective drives to Yalu. And in fact there was little contact between them. The gap dividing them was at times as much as fifty miles wide. The 1st Marine Division, commanded by Major General Oliver Smith, was one of three U.S. divisions in the X Corps zone (3d & 7th ID were the other two). The Marines were on the left flank or eastern flank of X Corps' zone. U.N. command and control at the highest levels was fairly responsive. Although MacArthur's headquarters was situated in Tokyo, he made numerous trips to the front and did not hesitate to recall commanders for conferences in Tokyo (Lieutenant General Almond was recalled for such a conference during the Chosin operation). Also communications from Korean commands to HQ in Tokyo and vice versa were adequate.

Command and control within the X Corps was achieved along clear lines. Almond expected his division commanders to exercise independent judgment. It appeared that Almond permitted them to be virtually

Independent. He was almost forced to do this at Chosin because of the distances over which his divisions were operating north of Wonson. Almond gave mission type orders and he expected his commanders to aggressively carry them out.

The 1st Marine Division exercised command and control through Major General Smith and his three Regimental Combat Team commanders (1st Marines--Colonel Puller; 5th Marines--Colonel Litzenberg; 7th Marines--Lieutenant Colonel Murray). These were aggressive leaders and their RCTs were organized basically the same and were tailored for their missions in the Chosin area. Each RCT had its own staff which functioned very much like the present day U.S. Army brigade. Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) permitted subordinate units to operate independently for days at a time. Aggressive leaders issued clear, concise orders, and attachments and detachments were conducted in an orderly manner.

#### 5. Intelligence

It is a cardinal rule of military intelligence that contingencies be recommended on the basis of an enemy's capabilities, and not upon his intentions, or what his intentions are perceived or hoped to be.

It was a common failing at virtually every level of the United States-dominated UN command in Korea that wishful thinking brought on the abeyance of this rule with respect to the Chinese Communist Forces (CCF).

For a time, following the liberation of Seoul and the cautious advance by ROK Army units across the 38th Parallel, American General Headquarters in Tokyo (GHQ-Tokyo) and its chief operating arm, 8th Army, considered the possibility of Chinese intervention in North Korea. Indeed, this possibility grew more pronounced at successive points along the way: at the beginning of the UN drive into North Korea in support of the ROK Army; at the fall of Pyongyang, the North Korean capital; and with the seizure of Wonson, the major port in northeastern Korea.

Strangely, as UN forces closed on the Yalu River, the boundary between North Korea and Manchuria in China, both GHQ-Tokyo and 8th Army relaxed their vigils. It had been thought, wishfully, that China would intervene early. It was later thought, yet more wishfully, that she had missed her best chance and would never intervene. No thought was given as to her ability to intervene, early or late.

After the creation of the mightiest military machine ever forged, the U.S. dismantled her military might with incredible vigor, utterly emasculating her armed forces after 1945. Intelligence hardware went the way of the rest, to the scrap heap. Missing the Chinese buildup in Manchuria and the subsequent move by the CCF into North Korea was less a matter of chance than that of total inability. The scarcity of vital aerial



photo-reconnaissance lay at the root of the intelligence failure. The U.S. lacked not only the hardware, but the experience as well--the years of human expertise gained in truly remarkable intelligence-gathering and assessment feats during the war years. The finely honed minds that had, by 1945, mastered the art were gone, or gone soft from inactivity.

From the night of October 15, 1950 onward, hundreds of thousands of highly disciplined Chinese combat infantrymen walked across the Yalu bridges and hid themselves in the mountainous North Korean hinterland. The UN command did not detect the move until the CCF picked a few fights late in the month. The results of these fights were so at odds with prevailing wisdom and desires as to confuse rather than enlighten. Given only a hint of the news and the preconceptions of the men to be convinced, the intelligence assessors were likely to come to erroneous conclusions. And they did, in perfect harmony with the fondest hopes of the Chinese. By the end of October, 1950, the smattering of reports alleging a Chinese intervention in North Korea began adding up. But intelligence summaries from the field were rejected by senior intelligence officers and the commanders they served. One example was early in the Chosin campaign, 1st Marine Division G2 had become convinced, on the basis of reports from civilian sources, the CCF was moving through the countryside in columns of substantial size, and that these bodies were harboring in native villages, and in mine shafts which were common in the Koto-ri Yudam-ni area. These views were reported to the air arm; it was thought that the enemy's disappearance during daylight hours could be accounted for in this manner, rather than because any considerable number was dug in and concealed along the high ground. Initially, the air arm discounted this theory because daylight reconnaissance failed to show any number of troops active within the villages, but the civilian reports persisted, and North Korean natives besought the command to attack the villages in order to destroy the Chinese invaders. The UN command had not the will to comprehend the gravity of those reports. Eyes were fixed firmly upon the goal, on the Yalu River, and upon the rewards that would be bestowed for "getting the boys home" in keeping with promises made in the heat of a congressional campaign. Having passed safely beyond all the preconceived crisis points--crossing the 38th parallel, capturing Pyongyang, seizing Wonsan--the American generals ignored the implications so abundant even in the anemic intelligence summaries that did exist.

The Chinese proffered one last, best chance for the American generals to see the light. Crippled by a paucity of intelligence matter regarding the intentions and capabilities of their enemies, Chinese generals authorized an intelligence-gathering program of their own. Its form was of a particularly brutal variety. Because they lacked material means for gathering information, the Chinese mounted a series of limited offensive operations in the hope of learning how well their enemies would stand up in a hard fight, what weapons those enemies might bring to bear, what determination those enemies might show in the face of adversity.

In the very last days of October and the first we November, very large Chinese infantry formations struck at a half points throughout North Korea. It seemed to the victims that whole Chinese divisions emerged from the ether. There was no warning and no time to think. There was barely time to man the defenses. A number of ROK units were utterly defeated in exceptionally savage fighting, and a U.S. Army battalion was nearly destroyed.

The Chinese were elated with the results of their so-called First Phase Offensive. They had found nearly every weak spot in the enemy organization, and they had learned that their tactics of surprise and mass assault worked against a modern Western army. There was one negative point recorded. In the narrow Sudong Gorge, about thirty miles above the northeastern port city of Hungnam, on the road to the Chosin Reservoir, several Chinese divisions had been soundly defeated by the 7th Marine Regiment. It was not an important defeat, for the Chinese were seeking information, not territory. But that single American victory was so at odds with everything else they learned from the bloodletting of the First Phase Offensive that the Chinese generals decided to take special steps to insure a victory over those same Marines later in November, when the Second Phase Offensive was slated to scour North Korea of the Western armies.

While the First Phase Offensive was hot, the American generals were appropriately attentive. But the sudden, total disappearance of a full Chinese field army of several hundred thousand men gave the illusion of a UN victory. Senior intelligence staffers were quick to take the lead from their commanders, announcing that the Chinese "volunteers" had been resoundingly defeated and sent into headlong retreat across the Yalu River.

Curiously, no one asked where so many Chinese had hidden themselves through the latter half of October--nor how. (The Marines had an idea.) Because they lacked the will to know, the UN commanders could not know of the threat poised across their fronts and athwart their flanks.

#### 6. Doctrine and Training

Trained and equipped to operate as a cohesive, balanced fighting force, undertaking primarily amphibious missions, 1st Marine Division was, first, a bit out of its element on the Asian mainland and, second, thrown into some organizational confusion by the nature of simultaneous and divergent missions handed it by X Corps. Moreover, the division had been roughly used in the Inchon-Seoul drive, and it had not been brought back to strength following its withdrawal from west-central Korea.

First Marine Division was neither equipped nor trained for a protracted land campaign so far from its sources of supply, nor was it

adequately outfitted for a mountain campaign in sub-zero weather. That the war was thought to be nearing a conclusion did not mitigate the fact that the Marines were being misused.

Marine chances of survival depended to a great extent on the lessons learned from the operations of the past four weeks. Mountain warfare and cold weather fighting had not been considered Corps specialties. But Marines prided themselves on adaptability, and a Marine regiment had been the first American outfit to fight it out with a large Chinese force. A whole Chinese division was chewed up by RCT-7 in the process, but a more far reaching result was the evaluation of the new enemy's methods. Colonel H. L. Litzenberg, CO of RCT-7, not only studied CCF tactics but also tried out new Marine techniques to meet them.

Throughout the four week advance from Hamhung to Yudam-ni the 7th Marines became virtually a traveling tactical laboratory. CCF tactics, it was observed, thrived on dispersion. One of the chief objects of enemy night attacks was to create this condition, if it did not already exist, by penetrations aiming to cut off an outpost, a platoon, or even a company. Cohesion was the tactical remedy--cohesion making the most of superior firepower. Thus the Marines adopted at all times a formation able to resist a surprise attack from front, flanks, or rear. This meant encamping in a tight perimeter and marching like a moving fortress. In either event, experience taught that a regimental formation must have a minimum depth of 3,000 yards and a maximum depth of 5,000 yards to provide all around protection and mutual support. Patrols, consisting usually of a reinforced company, were seldom sent beyond the reach of supporting artillery fires.

1st Marine Division at its four main positions--Yudam-ni, Hagaru-ri, Koto-ri, and Chinghung-ni--put depth of organization, and unity within the local force, above all else, and occasionally with deliberate intent foreswore certain of the higher ridges in the immediate vicinity to the enemy, for the sake of greater tightness within its own lines. At all points its forces operated fortress fashion within their own perimeters, counterattacking in such measure as was necessary to keep CCF off balance, and to deny the enemy an undue advantage in ground. In the positioning of these perimeters, the seeming advantages of vast fields of fire were yielded in favor of that use of ground which gave the defenders assurance of maximum mutual support around the circle. Instead of going to positions which might improve the prospect for an effective kill at long range, the division built its defenses so as to be certain of stopping CCF at short range, while preserving the integrity of its own ground. There was no over-stretching. On the contrary, the positions were contracted to the point of permitting organization of a mobile, local reserve. In the initial stage, the position at Hagaru-ri was perhaps an exception to this general rule, because of the slender numbers of the defending force, the nature of the terrain and necessity for enclosing the large airstrip. However, service and administrative personnel were used to plug gaps in these lines and as local reserve during the emergency arising from the CCF attack.

## 7. Mechanics of Defense

1st Marine Division used both outposts and listening posts beyond its defensive perimeters, though this practice varied from base to base depending upon the situation and the views of the local commanders. Small listening posts were used from 200 to 300 yards beyond the front. There were no local surprises. Recognition of CCF usually took place at between 40 and 150 yards range, when, during his approach, the enemy gave a hail in good English (as happened frequently), the defending line fired toward the sound of the voice. Through the day and into the late afternoon, there was active patrolling along the main avenues leading into the position. Though these patrols sought information of the enemy, their main purpose was this: the division held itself to be under active CCF observation at all times and it sought to impress the enemy with its own aggressiveness. These patrols were usually in company strength, though sometimes a reinforced platoon was used. They moved by motor or on foot, according to conditions and the purpose of the moment. These excursions usually did not extend beyond 1,500 yards, though at Yudam-ni there was active patrolling up to five miles beyond the central position. The patrols always moved within covering by their artillery. They were accompanied by an artillery FO, and whenever possible, attended by an OY aircraft, to assist the patrol's observation and communication with home base. First Marine Division believed that one consequence of its extensive patrol activity was that its main bases were never harassed by small enemy groups during the day.

Under the system used in the division, the platoon and company leaders directed supporting fires by the heavier weapons in preparation for, and during the course of, the fire fight. They depended upon the SAC (Supporting Arms Center) which operated at battalion level for fire planning. Essentially the SAC Coordinator was a sort of assistant S-3 in charge of the plan of fires, both in the attack and on defense. In the normal situation, he operated at the Battalion OP; when in perimeter and defending all around a circle, his station was at the CP, or the S-3 tent. During the organization of a defense, he accompanied the S-3 on the initial reconnaissance; this gave him an opportunity to familiarize himself with the front, spot the HMGs, and take note of the approaches which were to be covered by artillery and mortar fire. When the reconnaissance was completed, the front lines were plotted on a situation map. The mortar and artillery officers were then told what fires to register. The actual conduct of fire was done by their FOs; when the registrations were completed, this information was relayed to the SAC and the concentrations were plotted on an overlay to the situation map. Also, when the patrols moved out, the SAC kept their positions plotted so that supporting fires could be loosed quickly. Usually, the SAC Coordinator was an infantry officer. He tied in closely to the Tactical Air Control Center so that if there were targets on which his weapons were working that would also be

suitable for attack by air, coordination was immediate and complete. Division battalions attributed a great measure of the effectiveness and total organization of their supporting fires to the perfecting of SAC's operations in the course of the campaign in Korea.

The main characteristic of 1st Marine Division in the attack was the care with which it elaborated the employment and synchronization of all weapons which assisted the rifle company or battalion to win ground at minimal cost. In the typical situation, the rifle company would temporarily be halted by intense automatic rifle fire from the high ground. It was found that CCF tended toward this practice in the setting up of hilltop positions; not infrequently the dug-in works along the hilltops were of lesser consequence, and were intended to distract the attention from the real strength in automatic weapons positioned and concentrated in the saddles between the crests. The company then called for mortar fire on the position meanwhile holding its ground. Simultaneously, or immediately following the mortar fire, artillery worked over the enemy ground from which the fire had been coming, as well as the ridges beyond it. There was an air control officer with the company. A number of planes were called in and were on station. It was arranged that as the final rounds of artillery fell, the planes would make their first strikes at these same positions. The infantry bounded forward as the planes began to attack, or depending upon proximity to the CCF position--started to advance at the moment of the final impact. This was not the rare or unusual instance of coordination between division rifle components and the supporting arms in the attack. It was the average procedure, and during operations in the north there were relatively few deviations from it. Attack after attack, by the company, battalion or regiment, was according to this same pattern.

The multiplying of fires, and the combining of flat trajectory, angle and vertical missiles no doubt resulted in the killing of more CCF than would have been done by any part of this combination acting singly.

#### 8. Condition and Morale

Morale in the 1st Marine Division was very high. The men knew their leaders were supporting them, as shown by frequent general officer visits to the front lines, and subordinate leaders leading from the front. Other factors contributing to high morale were rapid removal of wounded and dead, reasonably good equipment, excellent fire support of all types, and an assurance that the Marines could and would beat the CCF. One reason for this self-confidence of their ability to defeat the CCF was provided by Fox Company, 7th Marines, which for five days and nights preserved a perimeter defense in isolation, holding the pass between the division force at Hagaru-ri and the 7th and 5th RCTs at Yudam-ni (see Map 4). During this period the company was wholly surrounded by CCF troops in aggregate strength of perhaps two battalions. The perimeter was penetrated at one point on the first night, but the ground was regained and CCF driven off before morning.

The enemy attacked along the same line and about the same strength on the second night, but was again repulsed. On the third night, CCF came on less surely, though by that time Fox company had taken heavy losses. The next two nights, however, the Chinese failed to assault the company's position. By the fifth morning, a battalion of the 7th Marines, moving cross-country to the relief of Fox company, was temporarily halted by strong CCF resistance within less than 1,000 yards from the latter's lines. Such was the morale of Fox Company, after its successful defense of the position for five days that it offered by radio to send a patrol out and bring the relieving battalion in. The incident was not the rare exception; it was typical of the spirit which activated 1st Marine Division's operations as a whole. "We had the feeling at all times that we had the upper hand and that we were giving the enemy a beating wherever he chose to fight," said General Smith of the operations of his forces. This estimate was supported by the detailed study of what occurred to companies and platoons in the division main areas of engagement, and of what was seen, by men in the fighting line, of CCF's losses and reactions. They believed, on the basis of what they saw and felt, that they had been victor on every field. They were confident that they had achieved these results mainly with their own fighting power.

Operations by the 1st Marine Division north of Chinghung-ni provided one of the best opportunities for the study of effects of extreme cold on men, weapons, and other equipment under actual combat conditions, than any American battle in modern times. The division was as well clad and equipped for cold weather fighting as any U.S. division was likely to be under existing TEs and issues. More over, its disciplines were such as to give the individual maximum chance for survival against the cold, and to spare him abnormal privation and rigor. Tentage was taken along and was used to the full extent permitted by the fighting situation. Troops brought in from outpost, or coming in from sustained bouts with the cold during attack beyond the defensive perimeters, were rotated through warming tents. In these tents they were enabled to dry their socks and thaw out shoepacs. Hot coffee was served there and hot C-rations, after thawing in boiling water. The wounded were kept in warming tents. When the tents began to overflow, those with lesser injuries were rotated back to the line, and thereafter watched lest their condition worsen. Cases of extreme shock or exhaustion--either from the intense cold or that combined with unusual exertion--were given twenty-four hours rest in warming tents before being returned to duty.

Such were some of the precautions taken to maintain the health and vigor of the command against the adverse weather. The results can be summarized as follows:

a.) About twenty percent of the command suffered from respiratory ailments, including everything from bad colds to pneumonia. The medical authorities considered that this figure was low in view of the conditions.

b.) "Combat fatigue" cases, in the degree that the man became permanently non-duty, were so rare as not to constitute a medical problem. Of relative frequency were the "shock" cases in which the individual could return to duty after twenty-four hours rest.

c.) The division had about 2,700 non-battle casualty cases, of which approximately 2,000 were frostbite cases. Of the latter, about ninety-five percent were foot cases. Most of the hand cases were mild. The ear cases were found to be due in most instances to carelessness. However, in taking survey of the foot cases, General Smith, his subordinate commanders, and the Regimental Surgeons, after questioning men, platoon leaders and others, and going into the attendant circumstances, arrived at the estimate that only twenty percent of these cases came of any carelessness on the part of the individuals, and eighty percent were due to the conditions of the fight and the inadequacy of the footwear.

Finally, a high percentage of men was lost to the line because of intestinal disorders induced by the eating of the half frozen C-rations.

#### 9. Leadership

The respective unit commanders were well suited to their positions. Major General Oliver P. Smith was an original among Marines. He didn't drink. He never swore. In moments of stress or excitement, he pulled mildly at a short pipe. Yet Oliver Smith always seemed able to find a drink for a man who thought he needed one, nor was he ever more than amused by the fiery language of the Marines around him. And the troops always got their smokes. At fifty-seven MG Smith still had a full head of hair. He was a scholar, a reader whose library was loaded with novels as well as with histories and military texts. At the Army's Infantry School at Fort Benning, at the French War College, at the Marine Corps Schools in Quantico, Oliver Smith showed himself to be one of those rare men who love to work and who find a natural delight in detail. But General Smith had also led in battle. He had commanded the Fifth Marines at Talasea on New Britain, had been assistant division commander at Peleliu and the Tenth Army's Marine deputy chief of staff at Okinawa. Though a born planner, he could realize that men and munitions move on earth as well as on paper. It was his conservative approach to fighting his division which led to preparations for trouble at a time of optimism in high state and military circles. On 15 November, when two other X Corps divisions were racing unopposed to the border, General Smith was concentrating his units and thinking in sober terms of logistics. For it was not mere coincidence that four days later the first tanks and heavy vehicles were on the way to Hagaru-ri. Supplies of all types were trucked from the Chinhung-ni railhead to the dumps at Koto-ri and Hagaru-ri.

When in command, Oliver Smith acted on two simple principles. The first was to be prepared for the worst, and the second to be optimistic when it came. Again, it was the first rule that concerned him as the 7th Marines took the road from Hamhung to the Reservoir. He was alarmed to see his Division strung out in bits, battalion by battalion, from south to north. They would reach a point where as much as 175 miles separated his southernmost and northernmost units. And the cold was socking in. So General Smith protested to MG Almond, commander of the X Corps. But to no avail. So fearing the worst, he fought to bring his units closer together.

Commanding the 1st Regiment was perhaps the most famous Marine of all time--the celebrated Colonel Lewis (Chesty) Puller. Here was a professional whose career ran back to World War I--who had fought in Haiti, Nicaragua, across the Pacific, had wrested Seoul from the Reds. Chesty had an enormous rib cage supported by a pair of spindly sticks for legs--five feet six inches tall and much of that height occupied by a commanding head and out-thrust jaw. His creed was attack and he boasted that he had never commanded an office in Washington. Here was a mustang who was a living legend to Marines; whose deeds in battle were rivaled only by his wisecracks. Puller was a flamboyant, cocky, combative Marine and yet a man who never stopped studying the military art or reading history.

"Blitzin' Litzen" commanded the Seventh. Colonel Homer L. Litzenberg had been a boot himself, had had his head shaved clean at Parris Island in 1922, had pulled mess duty or swabbed out the head with a squeegee. Stocky, square-faced, bred in the Pennsylvania steel country, Litzenberg was a man whose outer toughness masked a deep inner passion. He could be moved to tears by tales of the valor or suffering of his men. He was also good-natured. Many an officer of equal rank would be astonished to see how lightly he regarded the ribbing of his staff; or when his unit was off the lines, how eagerly he would sit down to drink and sing with them. Litzenberg had much sea duty behind him, and his share of decorations. He was one of the few Marines who had seen European service in WW II, though he had also fought in the Pacific. Here was a mustang who had been inside many military classrooms and who had made plans for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. "Blitzin' Litzen" they called him because his battle tactics yoked caution to combativeness. He would mark his foe first, be sure of him, and then overwhelm him.

Lieutenant Colonel Raymond L. Murray was leading the Fifth. There were many full colonels in the 1st Marine Division, but Murray still led the 5th Marines. He was thirty-seven. He was tall, broad-shouldered, raw-boned, with a fighting, angular face. He was no mustang, but another breed of Marine commander: one of those who studied in military schools other than Annapolis and West Point and came into the Marines. Texas A&M had given him his military studies, and Peking and Iceland had proved his capacity to lead. He had studied again at the British Force Tactical School, and then at twenty-nine had commanded a battalion on Guadalcanal.



He was still commanding it at Tarawa, and again at Saipan where, with two Silver Stars to his credit, he won his Navy Cross for holding that battered unit together though seriously wounded himself. Murray was highly regarded as a planner as well as a field leader, and his great personal bravery was complemented by a simple clarity of speech which made his orders and his reasons plain. These were the Marine commanders at Chosin. These men were complemented by subordinate leaders of the same high quality and experience. They and their men were a mixture of what Marines refer to as the "Old Breed" and the "New Breed."

C. Comparing the Opposing Forces to Ascertain Their Combat Effectiveness--Chinese Forces

The Communist Chinese forces in North Korea at the time of the action included elements of two of China's five field Armies. These field armies were subdivided into army groups of three to four armies each. Each army was further subdivided into three or four divisions. The enemy order of battle in the Chosin area is shown in appendix 1.

Elements of the 4th Field Army, including the 13th Army Group, entered Korea between 14-20 October 1950. The 42d CCF Army, a subordinate unit of the 13th Army Group, crossed the Yalu at Manpojin and moved south along the Kanggye-Changjin-Hagaru axis toward the Chosin reservoir. It was most likely the flank security element of the 13th Army Group as that unit advanced south against the right flank of the Eighth U.S. Army. One division, the 124th, was engaged by Marines near Sudong from 2-6 November 1950. That Division sustained heavy casualties, withdrew north toward Hagaru, and then moved west with the remainder of the 42d Army to rejoin the 13th Army Group. Unknown to the X Corps, they had been relieved in zone by the approaching 9th Army Group of the 3d Field Army.

The 9th Army Group consisted of the 20th, 26th, and 27th armies, parts or all of which were engaged in the action around the Chosin Reservoir. The 20th Army, 58th, 59th, 60th and 89th Divisions, crossed the border at Manpojin between 8-15 November 1950. They moved in the Kanggye-Unsongdong-Yudam-ni axis to envelope the Marines at the reservoir from the west. The 89th Division moved south to protect the armies' right flank and to sever the MSR between Hamhung and Hagaru. The 60th Division frontally attacked the Marine forces at Yudam-ni from the west and northwest. The 58th and 59th Divisions attempted to cut the MSR between Yudam-ni and Hagaru.

The 20th Army, 79th, 80th, 81st and 90th Divisions, conducted the majority of its operations on the eastern side of the reservoir. The 79th Division moved just west of the road leading from Changjin to the reservoir in order to maintain contact with the 20th Army Group. It participated in the attacks on the Marines at Yudam-ni. The 80th Division advanced down the eastern side of the reservoir against elements of the 7th Infantry Division. The 81st and 90th were believed held in reserve.

The 26th Army, 76th, 77th, 78th and 88th Divisions, appears to have been the army group reserve. Only two of the divisions of this group saw action during the battle. The 76th Division entered the fray around Hagaru on 5 December and 77th Division entered some time later around Koto-ri. The 78th and 88th Divisions were believed last in the order of march and unable to reach the area in time to participate in the battle.

All the Communist Chinese divisions were essentially the same. They were manpower and small arms heavy and artillery and firepower light. The 9th Army group was an infantry organization. It consisted of the three infantry armies previously mentioned without attached combat, combat support, or combat service support units. In the Chinese force structure, artillery above division level was organized into brigades and divisions under the control of the PLA General Headquarters. The 2d Artillery Division was assigned to the 9th Army Group but it never crossed the Yalu. Tanks (with the exception of seven seen east of the reservoir), effective air defense units, and engineer support were essentially nonexistent at all levels during the battle. In short, the Chinese Army was primarily a rifle and machinegun army, while ours was a force that counted most on mortars, artillery, tanks, bazookas and bombs.

The Table of Organization Chinese infantry division consisted of 1,430 officers and 12,619 enlisted men. However, the division's normal strength ranged between 7,500 and 10,000. Each division had a small staff, three infantry regiments, an artillery regiment, and separate companies of engineers, communicators, rear service personnel, scouts and security personnel.

The infantry regiment (350 officers, 3,287 enlisted) averaged closer to 2,500 soldiers. It consisted of a small staff (25 officers), a composite security/reconnaissance/engineer company (12 officers, 16 enlisted), a signal company (12 officers, 120 enlisted), a rear services company (43 officers, 140 enlisted), a weapons battalion and three infantry battalions.

The weapons battalion (64 officers, 525 enlisted) while theoretically armed with a mix of weapons, depended mainly on mortars, machineguns, and recoilless rifles. The Table of Organization and Equipment standards called for a 6x82-mm mortar company and a 4x70-mm firing battery.

The infantry battalion (64 officers, 764 enlisted) had a normal strength of between 600 and 700. The battalion had a medical platoon; a headquarters company that included the staff, a signal platoon, and a supply platoon; a weapons company; and three infantry companies. The weapons company (10 officers, 112 enlisted) consisted of a recoilless rifle platoon (2x57mm), a mortar platoon (3x82mm) and a heavy machinegun platoon

(3x12.7mm). Each rifle company had a weapons platoon (2 officers, 41 enlisted) with 2x3.5" rocket launcher and 3x60-mm mortars, and three rifle platoons (2 officers, 46 enlisted) with 3x12 man squads and two light machinegun squads (one gun each).

The weapons table for the regiment showed the following weapons totals:

Pistols	206
Rifles & Carbines	1962
SMG	1054
12.7 AAMG	9
LMG	69
HMG	18
3.5"RL	18
57-mm RCL	9
70-mm HOW	4
60-mm MORT	27
82-mm MORT	15

At this point in the war the artillery regiment (189 officers, 1,399 enlisted) existed in name only. During the fighting around the reservoir there were only six instances where the Chinese supported their attack with light artillery. In all six, no more than two or three guns were employed at any one time and the shelling was limited to a few rounds.

A diagram of the Chinese Infantry Division is shown in appendix 2.

While the Chinese force was large, approximately 90,000 men in twelve divisions, it suffered from deficiencies in the supporting arms. Compounding their problems were the primitive nature of the technology they used and the lack of an effective logistic infrastructure.

The Communists used a combination of weapons they had collected over the previous twenty-five years of war. Those weapons consisted of a mix of U.S. weapons captured from the Nationalist Chinese, Japanese weapons captured at the end of World War II, and 1st generation Russian weapons provided by their allies, the Soviets. Individual weapons were in short supply; some men were sent into combat weaponless. Those men were expected to use captured U.S. weapons or weapons taken from their fallen comrades. While the small arms they did possess were in most cases comparable to those possessed by the Marines, their lack of heavier weapons (tanks, artillery, air defense artillery, and aircraft) common to the modern armies of that period (and the Marines) was a significant disadvantage.

Logistically, the situation was an even greater disaster. The 9th Army Group had crossed the Yalu in mid-November and moved to the battle area at maximum speed. It appears that all other major considerations,

logistics included, were subordinated to the need for getting the troops forward to relieve the 42d Army as quickly as possible. The resultant haste in logistical planning and the lack of a logistical infrastructure would have grave repercussions once the battle was joined.

The primary means of transportation in the Chinese Army was animal power. All artillery at this point was horse drawn. The artillery regiment consisted of five trucks, 512 animals and 156 carts. The infantry division, less the artillery regiment, included 699 animals.

Resupply was left to the ingenuity of commanders and the individual soldiers. Each man was issued a four-day supply of food--rice, millet or soy beans--and was expected to be resupplied locally, as had been the procedure during the revolution. A captured Chinese soldier said he and his comrades were issued eighty rounds of ammunition as they crossed the Yalu. When this ammunition was expended there apparently was no more. The majority of the captured Chinese soldiers were in the early stages of starvation.

The soldiers were dressed in a two-piece reversible mustard-yellow and white uniform of quilted cotton and a heavy cotton cap with fur-lined ear flaps. This uniform was worn over their standard summer uniform and any other layers of clothing they had. The first soldiers were wearing canvas shoes with crepe rubber soles.

The medical situation was even more appalling. In the 3d Field Army there were only eighty doctors and medical experts. In 1949 there was one doctor for each 33,000 persons in the PLA. The 20th Army had hundreds of deaths from tetanus caused by improper care of wounds. Hundreds more were incapacitated by typhus or ailments of malnutrition. More than ninety percent of the 26th Army suffered from frost bite, and the 27th Army complained of 10,000 nonbattle casualties alone. The majority of POWs were infested with lice. If lucky a wounded soldier was removed from the battlefield and then to the rear by litter using impressed civilians as litter bearers.

As enemy soldiers became casualties they were not replaced. In the attack, usually platoon or company size, new units were fed into the battle to maintain the mass of the thinned out ranks. When a unit became combat ineffective, it was withdrawn from the line and reorganized with another unit or simply disappeared from the battlefield.

The personnel and equipment replacement system was so ineffective that it failed completely. After this operation, the 9th Army Group could not be located for almost three months. It reappeared on the battlefield on 18 March 1951 northeast of Seoul. Administration was equally as primitive. This was a military force without typewriter or adding machine. Calculations were done on an abacus and reports were done mainly by hand and brush. The number of men who could read and write was very small.

Three quotations provide the best picture of the lack of emphasis placed on logistics by the Chinese leadership, and the impact that lack of emphasis had on their forces in North Korea. The first from LTC Robert B. Rigg's book Red China's Fighting Hordes:

No Red Chinese general has ever achieved fame or prominence in China's wars because he was a successful G-4, quartermaster or logistician. There are . . . generals who enjoy great reputations because they managed to operate on logistical shoestrings, or drove their ill-assorted supply staffs to regiment the public and rape the countryside . . .

The second comes from a 26th Army after action report:

A shortage of transportation and escort personnel makes it impossible to accomplish the mission of supplying the troops . . . The troops were hungry. They ate cold food, and some had only a few potatoes in two days. They were unable to maintain the physical strength for combat; the wounded personnel could not be evacuated . . . The fire power of our entire army was basically inadequate. When we used our guns there were no shells and sometimes the shells were duds.

The third from a sergeant in the 26th Army:

The chief difficulties in Korea were (1) shortage of provisions (2) frostbite or illness due to lack of footwear (3) limitations on military operations due to nonsupply of weapons and ammunition . . .

The doctrine of the Communist forces was derived from the writings of Mao, their previous experience against the Japanese and Nationalist Chinese, and the technological and logistical shortcomings previously described. Their tactics were essentially guerilla in nature stressing maneuver rather than positional warfare and massed forces rather than massed fire power. It was an army that had not fought a sophisticated modern foe. In truth it had not defeated the nationalist forces, instead nationalist forces had disintegrated for a variety of reasons.

The Chinese doctrine was based on ten simple rules that all officers were required to memorize. They were purposely short because they were meant to be learned and applied. They were applied in a sequence that fit the conditions and the enemy they were opposing. Not all ten are appropriate to this action. The applicable rules are:

1. First strike at scattered and isolated enemies, and later strike at the concentrated, powerful enemies.

3. We take the annihilation of the enemy's fighting strength and not the holding or taking of . . . places, as the major objective.

4. In every battle, concentrate absolutely superior forces (double, triple, quadruple, and sometimes even five or six times those of the enemy) to encircle the enemy on all sides and strive for his annihilation. Strike the enemy in annihilating combat, concentrate full striking power on the enemy's front or side, so as to annihilate part of the enemy's strength then swiftly transfer forces to smash other enemy groups. Avoid battles of attrition . . .

5. Fight no unprepared engagements. Fight no engagements in which there is no assurance of victory.

6. Promote the valiant combat characteristics of not fearing sacrifice, fatigue or continuous action . . .

7. Strive to destroy the enemy while he is moving . At the same time lay emphasis on the tactics of attacking positions and visualize enemy strongpoints and cities.

9. Replenish ourselves by the capture of the enemy's arms . . .

Chinese small unit tactics were predicated on infiltration and mass attacks where the rifleman carries the combat burden. One Marine described a Chinese attack as "assembly on the objective." They normally used natural routes of advance such as draws or stream beds and deployed as soon as they met resistance. Their tactics emphasized foot mobility. LTC Riggs said, "While 50 miles a day are not unusual, 20 or 30 miles a night should always be expected of PLA units." We were more sophisticated but as Lynn Montross said, "From time immemorial the night has always been the ally of the primitive fighter and surprise his best weapon."

Chinese supporting arms were not integrated until later in the war.

In short, the Chinese attempted to use the same tactics they had been successful with against the Nationalist Chinese. They perceived U.S. Forces as overextended and attempted to envelope, encircle and defeat them in detail, using massed light infantry attacks.

The command, control, and communications system used to implement this doctrine was just as primitive as the logistical system. While the triangular organizational structure looked similar to that of the U.S. military organizations, the similarity ended there. The Peoples Liberation Army had not crystallized its own staff organization. Primitive radio communications accounted for many of the problems. Radio nets extended only

to regimental level and field telephones to battalion and separate company level. The primary means of communications at battalion and below was messenger or other visual or auditory signalling device. A 20th Army after action report made the following comment:

Our signal communication was not up to standard. For example it took more than two days to receive instructions from higher level units. Rapid changes of the enemy situation and the slow motion of our signal communications caused us to lose our opportunities in combat and made the instructions of the high level units ineffective . . .

Obviously, this lack of communications made timely analysis of the situation and quick response impossible. This capability, possessed by the Marines, was crucial to their success.

Orders were verbal at division level and below. The preferred method was to brief as many subordinates as possible on the details of the operation. This may explain the high quality of the intelligence we received from the common soldiers. Orders permitted little flexibility at division level and below. Each unit apparently was given a set task; and it persisted in that task until it was successful or ceased to exist as a cohesive fighting unit. There was little input from subordinate unit leaders as evidenced by this comment:

. . . the failure to annihilate the enemy at Yudam-ni made it impossible to annihilate the enemy at Hagaru. The higher level units refusal of the lower level units' suggestions. . .

While their command and control system was fully capable of controlling large units in march column and against less sophisticated enemy forces when it was confronted by a modern military force, capable of rapid and coordinated response, it was incapable of responding. If they were not successful by sheer weight of numbers or luck, the force was defeated at terrible cost to the Chinese.

The intelligence collection capability of the Chinese forces at the tactical and strategic level was ineffective. Their sole ability seemed to be their capability to locate the Marine forces. They grossly misjudged both the capabilities and the quality of the Marines. It seems almost inconceivable that they would not have learned more of our capabilities and limitations from the North Koreans.

The education and training of the leaders and men of the Chinese armies compounded their problems. Like their doctrine their capabilities evolved from experiences in the civil war and the war against the Japanese. LTC Riggs put it most aptly when he said:

Of leadership there is much; of generalship in modern warfare, there is little. Good guerilla leaders are not necessarily good army group commanders. The reds have many of the former and few of the latter . . . for all its excellence of fighting, the field army commanders never defeated a foe of armed or armoured modernity.

The formal military education of the red general officers of the period was dreadful. LTC Riggs surveyed over fifty of the most prominent officers and found:

Educational Background	Officers Attending
Chinese Military Academies	22
Soviet Military Academies	7
Japanese Military Academies	2
Military Education Unknown	5
No Formal Military Education	22
Two or More Military Schools	6

The 9th Army Group commander, General Sung Shih-lun, was born in Hunan in 1909. He attended the Fourth Class of Whampoa and by 1930 had become chief of staff of the 20th Army. He was expelled from the party at one point but worked his way back into its good graces. He served in Yenan until 1936 and Hopu until 1939. From 1940 until 1945 he was reindoctrinated and worked in war plans with Yeh Chien-Yeng. In 1945 he assumed field command. His five armies were the first to enter Shanghai during the civil war.

Seventy percent of the junior officers were without formal education. They were good officers, combat wise and campaign hardened; they knew how to lead troops in maneuver; but like their seniors they lacked basic, modern military understanding. Their education, if they received any, was locally conducted in a few weeks and stressed politics rather than military thought. The emphasis in the few military academies that existed was on politics, discipline, and basic military science in that priority.

The average soldier was a peasant. Fifteen percent were veterans of World War II, twenty-five percent veterans of the entire Civil War, thirty percent ex-Nationalist troops, and thirty percent had been inducted since 1948. The men were hardened to death and bleeding, having seen it in combat or in the conflicts that swept over China between 1937 and 1950. While not literate, the average POW, both officer and enlisted, showed a high order of intelligence. He could name his company, regiment, division, army, and army



group, and he knew the plans of higher headquarters. It was from these POWs that Marines learned the Chinese scheme of maneuver. Interestingly, the POW knew himself to be officer or enlisted, but could not state his rank.

Training within the Communist armies was decentralized. After the Civil War a part of each day was spent farming and in civic improvements rather than in military training. There were no large training centers for recruits or replacements. Men were recruited locally and trained by the unit to which they were permanently assigned. Infantry companies were divided into smaller groups. The recruits and less experienced men underwent training in basic soldiering. The older men were instructors and received advance instruction. Company training schedules varied but generally followed the master schedule of the army. Emphasis was placed on the use of rifles, bayonets and grenades. Due to a lack of ammunition the average soldier had fired less than fifty rounds before entering combat. Primary importance was placed on marching and discipline. The soldier was measured by how well he endured marching and how well he kept his weapon clean. Training at higher echelons was seldom conducted as many of the army leaders had civic responsibilities as well.

Readiness wise, the 3d Field Army was considered second only to the 4th Field Army. The 9th Army Group was the field army's strongest; the 26th Army was the group's strongest. Unfortunately, readiness is a relative term. True it had massive numbers of highly dedicated, politically indoctrinated troops; however it was critically short of officers at all levels who were proficient in modern military science, equipment necessary to fight on the modern battlefield, combat and combat support units other than infantry, and the ability to conduct combined arms operations. As they were soon to find out, numbers alone were not enough.

The morale of the 9th Army group as it entered the battle was excellent. In the words of one of the Chinese POWs:

Sometimes a unit possessing the spiritual element can defeat an enemy possessing excellent weapons. At the time we crossed the Yalu, the morale of the PLA was excellent . . .

As previously mentioned, a major part of Chinese military training was communist political indoctrination. In prehostilities indoctrination the righteousness of their cause, the support of the Korean people, the strength of numerical superiority, the superiority of their tactics, and their better (braver, more motivated, more experienced) troops were emphasized. PLA propaganda deliberately created the expectation of a quick, easy victory. Some Chinese were led to believe they would be home in three months after reaching Korea. Many were, but not the way they expected. This was the same approach that had been used successfully in the civil war against the nationalists.

Morale and positive attitude at the company level was developed by both company and political officers. The PLA organizational model was a triad and called for the merging of the military and political structure down to the squad level. Squads were made up of three-man teams with at least one politically strong man in each team. The soldiers were watched and reinforced constantly.

Public opinion had no effect on the morale of the force or their actions in battle. Red China is and was an autocratic society where decisions are made by the party and people respond without question.

Obviously, this was the first engagement of the war for the 9th Army Group. They had not fought for at least two years; and if they had not fought the Marines in China in the late 1940s, they would never have experienced the massive firepower they would encounter in their first battle. This massive firepower, combined with the collapse of their logistical system and the failure of their tactics and leaders, undoubtedly affected the outcome of the battle. In the words of a Chinese company commander:

We had more political training (prior to entering Korea) than military training . . . The political officers gave the men high morale . . . but when driven by a strong enemy, this kind of training becomes less effective.

Physically the Chinese were in excellent condition when they entered Korea. They were naturally immune to the diseases of the area they came from, but they had not been inoculated against common diseases of the battlefield. As the logistical system collapsed and the weather grew colder, their physical condition, like their morale, gradually seeped away.

The Chinese Communist forces in Northeast Korea had three courses of action from which to choose.

First, they could make an attack in strength from Sachang-ni through Huksu-ri against the widely dispersed 3d Infantry Division with the objective of seizing the Hamhung-Hungnam supply base and communication center. This action would have separated the 3d Infantry Division from the remainder of the Corps, cut off the 1st Marine Division from the sea, and denied I ROK Corps and the 7th Infantry Division the services of their main supply bases.

Second, they could have attacked in strength from the area south of the Chosin and Fusen Reservoirs toward Pungsan and then on to the sea. This action would have split the 7th Infantry Division and cut off I ROK Corps from the remainder of X Corps.

Third, they could launch an attack in great strength against 1st Marine Division in the vicinity of the Chosin Reservoir. This attack could destroy the entire 1st Marine Division and open a short, direct route to the Hamhung-Hungnam supply base and communications center.

Obviously General Sung or someone higher chose option three. In choosing that alternative the CCF ultimately failed to accomplish any major tactical objective except stopping the advance of the 1st Marine Division. In view of their perceived capabilities of mass, surprise, and offensive movement, their failure to create more than a meeting engagement reflects a lack of intelligence, a lack of complete analysis, or both. By attacking the Marines, General Sung committed several major errors.

Initially, he massed his strength against the only concentrated force in X Corps instead of against a weakness. At best the battle against the Marines would be time consuming and even if successful it still would have given X Corps the precious time it needed to complete the concentration of its dangerously overextended forces.

Then, he seriously miscalculated the strength and character of the Marines he was attacking. He drastically underestimated the firepower, air support, and tactical capabilities of this integrated unit.

Finally, he overestimated the capabilities of his force and underestimated the effects of the weather and his logistic system. This led to his beginning the battle without the second artillery division and only enough supplies to be successful if he defeated the Marines in his first attempt.

The option selected was most clearly stated by a POW who was questioned on 7 December:

Missions of the four (4) armies of the 9th Group are to annihilate the 1st Marine Division which is considered the best division in the U.S. After annihilating the 1st Marine division they are to move south and take Hamhung.

To accomplish this mission, the Chinese plan called for an attack against the MSR "after two regiments had passed northward." To accomplish this they attacked initially with two armies. The 20th on the western side of the reservoir and the 27th on the eastern side. The 20th Army approached the Marines from the west out of Unsongdong. The order of march appears to have been 89th, 60th, 59th, 58th Divisions. Just west of the reservoir the 89th turned south to protect the group's southern flank and to sever the MSR between Hamhung and Hagaru. The 60th Division continued to the east and attacked Yudam-ni from the west and northwest. The 59th and 58th Divisions, in that order, turned south and interdicted the MSR between Yudam-ni and Hagaru and attacked the Marines at Hagaru.

The 79th Division of the 27th Army moved south on the west side of the road that led from Changjin to the reservoir to gain contact with the 20th Army. It was ultimately involved in the attack on the Marines at Yudam-ni. The remainder of the 27th Army attacked elements of the 7th Infantry Division east of the reservoir.

The 26th Army appears to have been initially in reserve. The route it used to join the battle is unknown. Its 76th and 77th Divisions were committed south of the river near Hagaru on 5 December in an attempt to prevent the Marines from breakout. The 78th and 79th Divisions were not encountered during the battle. It is believed they reached the area too late for combat.

Like the decision to select option three, the attack of the Marines, there was an error in their decision selecting this scheme of maneuver. Of a total of twelve divisions available to the group, five were directed against the Marines, three against elements of the 7th Infantry Division, and four remained in reserve (they probably did not arrive until after 1 December). Instead of concentrating their force against the Marines and using the reservoir as an obstacle to movement by the 7th Infantry Division, they split their forces and apparently were left without an effective reserve to influence the battle for almost a week. They were successful in decimating the elements of the 7th Infantry Division, but they did not have the forces needed to deliver the critical blow against the Marines at the decisive time. The commander of the 20th Army committed the same error when he chose to engage the Marines at Yudam-ni, Hugaru, Koto-ri and along the two MSRs simultaneously rather than concentrating his manpower and attacking each in sequence.

While Sung's selection of intermediate objectives may have been consistent with the strategic goal of stopping X Corps movement toward the Yalu and preventing movement to relieve pressure on the U.S. Eighth Army by attacking the flank of the 4th Field Army, tactically it contributed to the group's failure to achieve its mission more than any other individual factor.

It is impossible to determine the effectiveness of the Chinese staff work and their estimate of the situation from Chinese records; for if they exist, we do not have access to them. However, as demonstrated above, at echelon's above group, army group, and group level, the system that was used failed miserably. Not only was the "worst" alternative selected, but once selected it was poorly executed. The lack of intelligence, lack of a modern military background, and their success against the nationalists in the Civil War undoubtedly contributed significantly.

#### IV. The Fight--Describing the Action

##### A. The Disposition of Forces at the Beginning of the Action

The locations of the friendly forces around the 1st Marine Division's positions on the night of 27-28 November 1950 were a result of the Marines northward attack during the month of November 1950.

The 1st Marine Division, as a part of the Xth Corps, was attacking north along the Hamhung-Hagaru axis with an ultimate mission of continuing to the Manchurian border. The division would then be extended approximately 175 miles along this corridor. Between 4 and 8 November 1950, the 7th Marines were taken under fire by the Chinese 124th Division. After suffering a decisive defeat at the hands of the 7th Marines, the 124th retreated to the north (Map 5). From the 8th of November through the 21st of November, the 1st Marine Division continued its northerly advance to the Chosin Reservoir and encountered limited resistance.

The situation began to change on the 21st of November when the 7th Marines ran into stiff resistance west of Hagaru. Chinese Communist elements were finally indentified around the Chosin Reservoir and positive confirmation of reinforcement activites was received. It became obvious that regular Chinese units were in North Korea and were preparing to fight U.N. forces (map 6).

By the 23d of November the Division was consolidating its positions and began its attack northward (Map 7). The 7th Marines attacked along the Hagaru-ri-Yudam-ni axis while the 5th Marine regiment attacked northward along the east side of the Chosin Reservoir. The 1st Marine regiment was in reserve with one battalion each at Hagaru, Koto-ri, and Chinhung-ni. Limited enemy resistance was encountered during the period of 23-25 November.

On 25 November 1950, the 7th Infantry Division began relieving the 5th Marines east of the Chosin Reservoir. General Smith, the 1st Marine Division commander, ordered the 5th Marines to Yudam-ni, when relieved, to participate in the planned attack on the 27th of November. The CCF organized an attack of immense proportions to isolate and destroy the 1st Marine Division once two Regiments had moved north of Hagaru. The 27th of November marked the actual opening battle of the Chosin Reservoir campaign. The 1st Marine Division Plan was to attack to the west from Yudam-ni with the 5th and 7th Marine Regiments. The 5th would make the initial assault westward and then the 7th would pass through and continue the attack. The Chinese had planned their own attack against the Marines at Yudam-ni on the night of 27 November. They would then continue their attack southward to destroy Marine positions in Hagaru, Koto-ri, and Chinhung-ni. Following this they would attack the rear elements of the Tenth Corps.

Anticipating possible major Chinese Communist activity, General Smith ordered his Marines to attack as planned, but to be prepared to withdraw and establish defensive positions if necessary. The USMC attack west from Yudam-ni on the 27th proceeded as ordered but met heavy resistance. The Chinese attack came on the night of 27-28 November.

In terms of combat forces on the 27th of November on the west side of the Chosin Reservoir, the Marines were vastly outnumbered. The Marines had three maneuver regiments and one artillery regiment stretching from Chinhung-ni on the south to Yadun-ni on the north. The Chinese initially had six divisions attacking with supporting elements. The Chinese were experienced combat veterans who were well led and highly motivated.

#### B. The Opening Moves of the Antagonists

When the Chinese attacked during the night of 27-28 November they attacked the strength of the Marine Division with two divisions, basically on line. They used the cover of night to assemble and locate their objectives within the Marine defensive positions. They then attempted to use a tactic which worked throughout the Chinese Civil War; an on line frontal assault. While this tactic worked extremely well against a poorly trained, dispirited force, it failed miserably against battle-hardened veterans. Gen. S. L. A. Marshall noted in his staff memorandum entitled "CCF in the Attack (Part II)."

. . . it was also noted by all forces within 1st Mar Div that the CCF enemy were invariably committed to attack on one line, with no options. This held true of divisions, as of battalion and company formations. Each had been given one set task. Each appeared to persist in this task so long as any cohesive fighting strength remained. When at last beaten back from it, the CCF appeared planless and aimless, incapable of rallying toward some alternative object. The troops withdrew and sat on the countryside.

The CCF also attacked along the MSR from Oro-ri to Hagaru-Ri and attempted to seize the towns of Hagaru-Ri, Koto-Ri, and Chinhung-Ni. The initial assaults against the towns followed the classical attacks against the 5th and 7th Marines to the north, and these attacks also failed. Where the Chinese did succeed was in establishing blocking positions, roadblocks and ambushes along the MSR. The Chinese physically blocked the poor road net in over forty locations with rocks, earth, and rubble. They also covered these positions by fire and attempted to destroy vehicles resupplying the defenders.

While the attacking force followed rigid plans, the Marines used initiative and determination in defending from their initial positions. Realizing the vulnerability of overextension, the 5th and 7th Marines consolidated both their defensive positions and their command structure into

one strong unit. A large perimeter was formed around Yudam-Ni which surrounded all combat and combat support elements. The leadership of this force was a council formed by both regimental commanders acting in concert and supported by both staffs. The Marines at Yudam-Ni, and, in fact, along the MSR, designed their defense structure around the principal of guaranteed defeat at short range. This policy, which sometimes sacrificed long-range fires, accounted for some of the bloodiest fights in the war, but also proved to be highly successful. In addition, the Marines along the MSR made particularly good use of company-sized and smaller combat patrols to destroy CCF forces attempting to sever the MSR.

The question of logistical support to both the CCF and the 1st Marine Division on the night of 27-28 November 1950 is still a question to be dealt with. The Marines were relatively well supplied throughout the night with the notable exception of illumination. They had, throughout the preceding week, stockpiled ammunition for a major offensive which they were expecting to commence on 27 November. The CCF, though, had a much more difficult position logistically during the initial battle. They only had the supplies that they could physically carry and limited back-up. In fact, as units expended their ammunition, they were pulled from the scene of the battle and were not resupplied and returned to the fight for days in some cases. This inability to sustain fight caused a situation, wherein the CCF was unable to commit its total force at any one time effectively.

Supporting fires were used extremely effectively by the Marines during the initial battle. They effectively integrated the 11th Marines Artillery Regiment and their organic mortars into a cohesive support element directed by front line forward observers. They continually changed priorities and massed fires throughout the night to forestall the enemy attack. The CCF, on the other hand, did not use supporting fires to any great extent. In this area, the history of the Chinese Army must be examined, again in relation to its battles in the Chinese Civil War and to its logistic transportation base. With a limited sustainment capability, the CCF, out of necessity, limited the employment of artillery. What limited indirect fire that was available was preplanned due to the poor communications nets and equipment within the Chinese Army.

Without a doubt, the critical incident of the initial battle, and in all likelihood, of the entire Chosin operation occurred around Yudam-Ni on the night of 27-28 November. The Chinese had attempted to catch the 5th and 7th Marines in an ambush and then destroy the 1st Marine Division and rout the Xth Corps. Failing initially, General Sung Shin-lun, the 9th Army Group commander, ordered the assault against the troops at Yudam-Ni to destroy the backbone of the 1st Marine Division and accomplish the mission of routing the corps. The lynchpin, therefore, was the destruction of the 5th and 7th Marines.

In this instance, General Sung made two major errors. First, he underestimated the size, strength and tenacity of his opponents. In particular he disregarded the impact of the Marines supporting fires. Secondly, he disregarded the principal of war which states that the enemy should be attacked at his weak point. Rather, General Sung massed his forces against the strongest and best trained unit in the entire Xth Corps.

Leadership during the initial battle was effective for both forces with the exception of the aforementioned judgmental mistake. The Chinese leadership proved to be competent and proficient within the limitations of its technical and logistical constraints. It is beyond the realm of reality to the western trained observer, how the Chinese leader was able to conduct wave after wave of attack over the decimated bodies of the predecessors, knowing full well that each attack would, in all likelihood fail. The Chinese soldier was also a marvel of precision and determination. With one goal and one objective in mind, he would attack bravely until killed or until his unit became ineffective. Given modern supporting arms, communications, and tactics, this soldier would have been almost unbeatable.

As good as the Chinese were, the Marines were better. They had a proud tradition and some of the best military leaders in the world. The leaders were not afraid to adapt their tactics to a constantly changing situation. Most important in the battle were the heroics of the individual Marines. Their bravery facing the adversities of weather and a numerically superior enemy truly helped determine the outcome of the battle.

This initial battle set the stage for the remainder of the Chosin Campaign. On the morning of 28 November the Marines had held their positions and in some places were seizing the initiative along the MSR. From General Smith down, there was a pervasive attitude that the Marines could defeat the CCF and would defeat them. Although the casualty rate was significant, the Marines won the battle. They inflicted substantially more casualties on the enemy, they held their positions, and they took command of the situation. This battle set the stage for the defeat in detail of the CCF 9th Army Group during the following two weeks by ground and air elements, and the eventual strategic withdrawal of the 1st Marine Division in classic fashion.

#### C. Chronology of the Battle

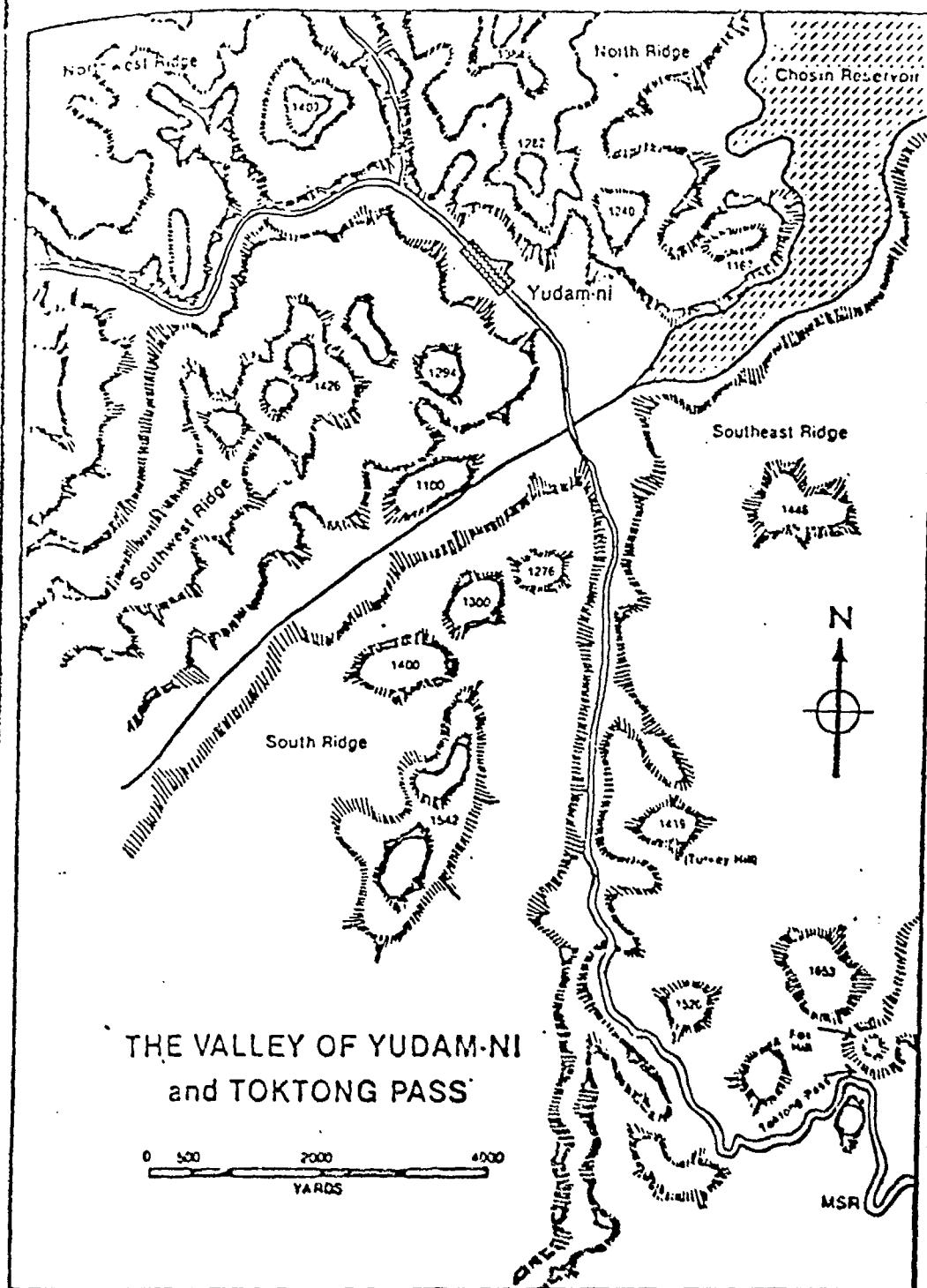
##### 1. 27 November 1950

##### a.) Yudam-ni

(1) 0815 2d Battalion, 5th Marines (2/5) attacked westward along the MSR toward an objective one and a half miles to the west.

(2) 0815 3/7 attacked north and west of Yudam-ni to





(See endpapers for GUIDE TO MAP SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS.)

MAP 4

seize high ground around the village. The attacks are successful.

(3) 2/5 is held up by CCF forces manning roadblocks and fortified positions on high ground overlooking the MSR. During the day, this main attack netted 1,500 meter advance.

(4) At 2125, assault battalions of the 79th and 89th CCF divisions attacked the 5th and 7th Marines regiments (RCT-5 and RCT-7) from the west, north, and northeast in a major battle. The temperature drops to -20o F. The Chinese push back the Marine lines slightly but suffer tremendous casualties.

(5) C Co, 1/7 and F Co, 2/7 were guarding Hill 1419 and the Toktong Pass respectively along the MSR to the south of Yudam-ni. Both of these units were surrounded and attacked by units of the 59th CCF division. Both USMC units sustained significant casualties but held their ground. Three days of Class I and III and two units of fire were on hand for USMC units at Yudam-ni.

b.) Hagaru No significant enemy action. CIC agents from 1/3 were collecting good intelligence on Chinese intentions to attack the defenses at Hagaru.

c.) Koto-ri No significant enemy action.

d.) Chinhung-ni Light probing attacks occurred during the night.

e.) By day's end CCF have succeeded in cutting the 1st Division's (USMC) MSR back to the coast at Hamhung. USMC units were isolated at Yudam-ni, Toktong Pass, Hagaru, and Koto-ri.

## 2. 28 November 1950

### a.) Yudam-ni

(1) USMC units attacked at dawn on 28 November to regain the high ground overlooking Yudam-ni that had been lost in the previous night's CCF attacks.

(2) The RCT-5 and RCT-7 commanders made plans in coordination with each other and issued joint orders. No one overall commander at Yudam-ni was appointed. However, the cooperative command system worked well.

(3) 1/7 sent south along MSR at 1015 to relieve C Co, 1/7 and F Co, 2/7. 1/7 advanced four miles south to C Co after heavy fighting but could get no farther. 1/7 was ordered back to Yudam-ni and returned at 2110 with Co C. F Co, 2/7 was still on its hill overlooking Toktong pass but had received some ammunition and medical supplies by air drop.

(4) At Yudam-ni RCT-5 defended the west and north sectors while RCT-7 defended the east, south, and southwest portion of the perimeter. No major attacks from the CCF occurred this day or night.

b.) Hagaru

(1) Weapons Company, 2/7, and three tanks were sent north along the MSR during the day to relieve F Co at Toktong Pass. This force was halted half way to the pass and then ordered to return to Hagaru which they did at 1500.

(2) A reinforced platoon from H Co, 3/1 and three tanks attempted to open the MSR south to Koto-ri. However, they were heavily engaged within 1,000 meters of the Hagaru perimeter and were in danger of being surrounded by over 300 Chinese when they were ordered back to the perimeter at 1530. Another patrol to the south similarly encountered heavy enemy resistance and returned to the perimeter. The size and strength of the CCF interdicting the MSR became evident.

(3) 1st Mar Div CP established at Hagaru (from Hungnan) at 1100 on 28 November. Around 1700 orders were sent to Yudam-ni to cease the attacks to the NW and to have RCT-7 attack to the south and clear the MSR to Hagaru.

(4) Major elements of the 58th CCF division attacked Hagaru throughout the night of 28-29 November. Only one battalion (-) (3/1) and numerous service units guarded this key 1st Mar Division logistics base with a four-mile perimeter. Intelligence gained from CIC agents allowed the battalion commander to accurately site his defenses against the planned CCF attacks. A heavy, all night battle ensued that ended with the Marines still holding the perimeter and the Chinese retiring at daylight after suffering tremendous casualties.

c.) Koto-ri

(1) At 1058, 1st Mar Div CG ordered RCT-1 to send a force north up the MSR to clear it and meet the force coming south from Hagaru. D Co, 2/1 was ordered to accomplish the task but was stopped one mile north of Koto-ri by CCF forces of the 60th CCF division entrenched along the MSR. This unit was forced to return to Koto-ri by 1735.

(2) G Co of 3/1, 41st Commando (Royal Marines) and B Co of 31st Inf (USA) arrived at Koto-ri and spent the night en route to Hagaru.

(3) No significant attack occurred during the night of 28-29 November.

d.) Chinhung-ni Probing attacks continued against the perimeter at night.

3. 29 November 1950

a.) Yudam-ni

(1) Repositioning of units to accommodate an RCT-7 attack south along the MSR was effected. Joint planning between RCT-5 and RCT-7 continued.

(2) A composite battalion was formed to try and fight south to relieve F Co, 2/7 but again this effort was turned back by CCF forces entrenched along the MSR.

(3) The night of 29-30 November was relatively quiet at Yudam-ni.

(4) F Co, 2/7 was attacked for the third night in a row at Toktong Pass. However, aerial resupply had been plentiful and an estimated three CCF companies were decimated at a loss of one Marine wounded that night.

b.) Hagaru

(1) Again, good intelligence by CIC agents provided information on enemy attack intentions. During daylight and early evening hours, air, artillery, and mortars hit CCF units trying to concentrate for attacks in assembly areas. A major attack on Hagaru was broken up by those supporting arms.

(2) Division issued order to RCT-7 to clear the MSR from Yudam-ni to Hagaru, gain contact with U.S. Army units east of Chosin Reservoir, set up a perimeter around Hagaru, and then reopen the MSR from Hagaru to Koto-ri. RCT-5 was to defend at Yudam-ni.

c.) Koto-ri

(1) Task Force Drysdale left Koto-ri at 0945 en route to Hagaru along the MSR. It consisted of G Co of 3/1, 41st Commando, B Co of 31st Inf (USA), tank platoons and a division headquarters logistics train and was commanded by the CO of the 41st Commandos, LTC Drysdale, British

Royal Marines. The task force was ambushed at "Hell Fire Valley" midway between Koto-ri and Hagaru and cut into four segments. Four hundred members of the TF reached Hagaru, 300 returned to Koto-ri, and 162 were either KIA or MIA.

(2) The enemy attacked to the north of the Koto-ri perimeter at 1745 in multibattalion strength. The attack only lasted for over an hour and the CCF broke off the attack leaving 200 dead in front of the USMC lines.

d.) Chinhung-ni 1/1 attacked from their perimeter during the day and caught over a battalion of CCF forces hiding in Korean villages. With heavy use of air and artillery, this CCF force was totally destroyed.

4. 30 November 1950

a.) Yudam-ni

(1) At 0600 on 30 November a joint RCT-5/7 order was issued to move the perimeter south of Yudam-ni in preparation for RCT-7's attack to the south. Planning, coordination, and execution of this move were the day's main activities. Aerial resupply of Yudam-ni continued.

(2) At 1920, Yudam-ni received the Div order for both RCT-5 and 7 to move to Hagaru and to be prepared for further moves south.

b.) Hagaru Reinforced by the tanks and personnel from TF Drysdale, the perimeter sustained another major attack from the 58th and 59th CCF divisions. The attacks came from the SW and the east. Fifteen hundred Chinese dead had been left in front of the perimeter in the aftermath of their two major attacks on Hagaru. The perimeter held and the Chinese retired prior to daybreak, having gained only a portion of East Hill, on the extreme eastern edge of the perimeter.

c.) Koto-ri No significant activity.

d.) Chinhung-ni No significant activity.

5. 1 December 1950

a.) Yudam-ni

(1) Joint oporder issued for the RCT-5/7 breakout to the south. Plan called for 1/7 to move across country to relieve F Co, 2/7 and seize Toktong Pass while 3/5 led the attack along the MSR and joined with 1/7 in the vicinity of Toktong Pass. 3/7, 2/5, 1/5 and a composite battalion guarded the rear and were to follow down the MSR. Artillery was echeloned and all equipment that could be brought out would be. Air would

cover the movement and the heavy trucks would come last so that breakdowns would not slow the whole column. The main advance would be straight along the MSR to Hagaru.

(2) 3/5, which was north of Yudam-ni, had great trouble disengaging from the enemy at 0800 on 1 December. Close fighting and air attacks finally allowed them to disengage. 3/7 opened a penetration and attacked to hold the shoulders of the penetration above the MSR. At 1500 3/5 attacked south above the MSR. 1/7 assisted 3/7 in seizing Hill 1419 and then started their attack cross country to the Toktong Pass.

(3) On the night of 1-2 December, 1/5, 2/5, and 3/7 were all hit by heavy attacks from the CCF, but with the aid of night fighters and supporting arms, the attacks were thrown back with heavy Chinese losses. 1/7 and 3/5 continued their progress south throughout the night.

b.) Hagaru

(1) At 1430 the 1st C-47 landed at the airstrip at Hagaru. Three others came in during the day to evacuate casualties. Air drops of supplies continued throughout the day.

(2) Planning was ongoing at the division headquarters for the breakout further to the south.

c.) Koto-ri 2d Bn, 31st Inf (USA) arrived at Koto-ri and was incorporated into the defense of the perimeter. The mission of this battalion (2/31) to relieve the Army units east of the Reservoir had been overcome by events.

d.) Chinhung-ni No significant activity.

6. 2 December 1950

a.) Yudam-ni

(1) 1/7 continued its cross-country attack toward Toktong Pass and repeatedly surprised enemy units. The terribly cold weather and the rugged, icy terrain were 1/7's worst enemies. However, the first elements of 1/7 were able to reach F Co, 2/7's position overlooking the Toktong Pass at 1125 on 2 December. F Co, 2/7's casualties during their five-day ordeal were twenty-six KIA, three MIA, and eighty-nine WIA. 1/7 set in on high ground around Toktong Pass for the night and was an exhausted battalion.

(2) 3/5 had to fight to clear both sides of the MSR as they attacked south. They fought continuously until 0200 on the night of 2-3 December when they halted 1,000 meters short of F Co, 2/7's position to rest and reorganize.

b.) Hagaru

(1) One thousand fifty Army survivors from three USA battalions which had been overwhelmed east of Chosin Reservoir made it back into the lines at Hagaru. Three hundred eight-five able-bodied soldiers were re-equipped and made into a provisional battalion. The rest were evacuated over the next several days by air.

(2) Casualty evacuations, resupply, and planning were the main efforts of the day at Hagaru. The enemy in the area was too depleted by his two previous night attacks to mount a major effort against Hagaru, although he still held East Hill against several USMC counterattacks.

c.) Koto-ri No significant activity.

d.) Chinhung-ni No significant activity.

7. 3 December 1950

a.) Yudam-ni

(1) 1/7 attacked in conjunction with 3/5 to clear Toktong Pass and then fell in along the MSR and led the move down the MSR to Hagaru. Resistance between Toktong Pass and Hagaru was light compared to that found north of the Pass, and 1/7 made excellent advances with the lead elements forming up into drill formations and marching into the Hagaru perimeter at 1900.

(2) 3/5, after attacking with 1/7 in the early and midmorning, held Toktong Pass and had other units in the column pass through then heading south along the MSR. About midnight 3/5 fell in along the MSR to move with and protect the artillery. The column then took the order in which it would reach Hagaru: 1/7, 1/5, 3/5, 2/5 and 3/7. Artillery and support units were interspersed throughout this column. A total of 145 air sorties were flown on 3 December to support the move south to Hagaru.

b.) Hagaru

(1) The 41st Commandos and a platoon of tanks were sent north from Hagaru to clear the last part of the road leading into Hagaru from Yudam-ni.

(2) Casualty evacuation, resupply, and planning continued at this base. Orders were received from X Corps not to defend at Hagaru but to pull back to Hungnam.

c.) Koto-ri No significant activity.

d.) Chinghung-ni No significant activity.

8. 4 December 1950

a.) Yudam-ni At 1400 on 4 December, the last elements of 3/7 entered the perimeter at Hagaru. The head of the column had taken fifty-nine hours to cover the fourteen miles from Yudam-ni to Hagaru and the rear unit seventy-nine hours. Some 1,500 casualties and nearly all of the equipment of the units located at Yudam-ni were brought to Hagaru and the first phase of the breakout was completed.

b.) Hagaru Casualty evacuations, resupply planning for the breakout further to the south, and warming and refitting the units arriving from Yudam-ni were the major activities of the day at Hagaru. A plan was issued this day to cover the destruction of supplies and equipment that would be left behind at Hagaru when the Division moved south.

c.) Koto-ri No significant activity.

d.) Chinghung-ni No significant activity.

9. 5 December 1950

a.) Hagaru

(1) At 0800 the Division order for the continuing attack to the south, along the MSR, was issued. Under this plan, the attack was to commence at 0630 on 6 December, with the 7th RCT attacking south along the MSR toward Koto-ri and the 5th RCT attacking East Hill to clear this high ground of Chinese so that RCT-7 could effect their breakout (the MSR to Koto-ri ran just south and was dominated by East Hill) and then following RCT-7 south, down the MSR. Division and regimental trains and the artillery units were to be placed between the two RCTs in the column moving south along the MSR. Tanks would bring up the rear.

(2) From 1 to 5 December enemy attacks against Hagaru were relatively light as heavy casualties, and lack of ammunition and supplies, made the CCF in the area unable to launch a major attack. During this period 3,150 Marine, 1,137 Army and twenty-five Royal Marine casualties were flown out of Hagaru on Air Force C-47 and Marine R4D aircraft from the rough strip at Hagaru. Although three planes either crashed or were heavily damaged during these evacuation operations, no lives were lost in this operation.

(3) Even though there were intelligence reports that the CCF was reinforcing its efforts against the 1st Mar Div with Chinese units closing from the vicinity of the Yalu, General Smith decided that his men



needed a day to rest and regroup before they could make an effective attack further south. The division staff was also severely depleted and the extra time facilitated better planning and coordination for the division attack to Koto-ri. Accordingly, 5 December for most of the Marines and soldiers in Hagaru was a day of rest.

(4) The 1st Marine Air Wing also did extensive planning and conducted face-to-face liaison on 5 December at Hagaru in an effort to extensively support the breakout and attack on East Hill on 6 December.

(5) Heavy artillery preparation, particularly 155mm missions were fired throughout the night of 5-6 December on targets along the MSR to the south in an effort to use up arms that could not be carried south and to soften up the route of advance. VT fuses were mainly used so that the road (MSR) would not be cratered.

b.) Koto-ri During the period 1-5 December, there were no friendly losses at Koto-ri while 646 CCF were KIA making various attacks against Koto-ri. Daily airdrop of supplies occurred during this time.

c.) Chinghung-ni No significant activity.

10. 6 December 1950

a.) Hagaru

(1) The attacks commenced as planned. The RCT-7 attacked south with 1/7 on its left flank, 2/7 along the MSR as advance guard, the provisional Army battalion (31/7) on the right flank, and 3/7 as the rear guard. Progress was initially slow and gained only against stubborn CCF resistance.

(2) RCT-5 attacked East Hill at 0700 but met determined opposition that was well dug in on commanding positions on the Hill. With heavy air, artillery, and mortar support, and with aggressive attacks, East Hill fell to RCT-5 at 1100. RCT-5 then occupied defensive positions and weathered several CCF counterattacks. The most determined counterattacks came during the night of 6-7 December and produced what was probably the fiercest fighting of the whole Chosin campaign. On the morning of 7 December, 1,400 Chinese bodies were counted in front of RCT-5's lines on East Hill.

(3) At 1400 the Division CG and the members of his staff displaced by helicopter to Koto-ri to begin planning the next phase of the breakout.

b.) Koto-ri Work commenced to improve the small airstrip at Koto-ri so that air evacuation of casualties could be effected when units from Hagaru arrived at Koto-ri. Plans were also made to receive, feed, and provide warming tents for the personnel arriving from Hagaru.

c.) Chinhung-ni No significant activity.

11. 7 December 1950

a.) Hagaru

(1) The order of march from Hagaru to Koto-ri turned out to be RCT-7 in the lead, followed by, in order, division train number one, 3/5, division train number two, 1/5, 41st Commandos (Royal Marines), and finally 2/5. The last unit (2/5) left Hagaru at 1200 on 7 December. A massive demolition effort left Hagaru one big cloud of smoke.

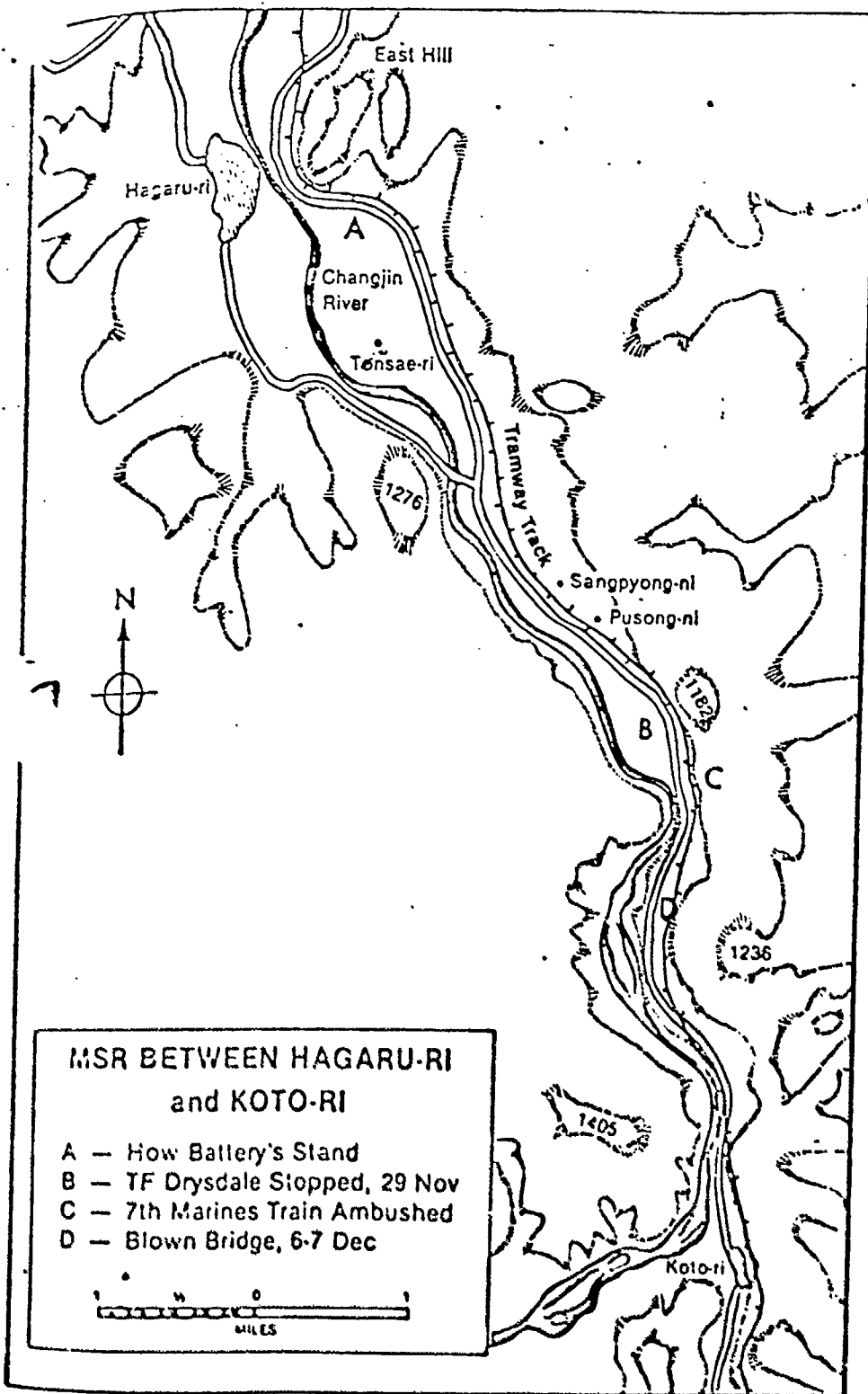
(2) The attack south to Koto-ri continued nonstop through the night of 6 December into the day and then the night of 7 December. There was some delay in getting division train number one to closely follow RCT-7. What happened then was that CCF forces that had been forced back off the MSR by RCT-7 had time to return by the time the trains followed. CCF forces in masses as large as 800 infantry men attacked the trains with the support of mortar fire. These attacks were beaten off, in many cases with the aid of night fighter close air support. Thus in the attack south to Koto-ri, the trains bore the brunt of the enemy action. The last elements of the 2/5 arrived at Koto-ri at 2400 on 7 December. It had taken them a total of thirty-eight hours to complete the eleven-mile attack from Hagaru to Koto-ri. Ten thousand men and one thousand vehicles made it through to Koto-ri. Friendly casualties from this action totaled 103 KIA, 7 MIA, and 506 WIA.

b.) Koto-ri

(1) A division operation order was issued at 1815 to implement a continuation of the attack south to Chinhung-ni commencing at first light on 8 December.

(2) An airborne tactical air direction center in an R5D was used for the first time ever on 7 December to coordinate air support and supported the division column as it attacked south along the MSR to Koto-ri.

(3) Two hundred casualties were evacuated by air through the newly improved air strip at Koto-ri. Navy TBMs evacuated the majority of those casualties, with between four and nine casualties to a plane.



(See endpapers for GUIDE TO MAP SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS.)

MAP 2B

(4) Eight sections of treadway bridge (Brockway) were airdropped into Koto-ri on 7 December. One was damaged in the drop and one was captured by the CCF. A critical bridge over a 2,500 foot chasm along the single lane MSR had been blown by the CCF south of Koto-ri and had to be spanned if the division was to be able to continue its breakout. These airdropped bridge sections were vital to this effort and had been requested on 4 and 5 December after it had been discovered that the bridge was blown. At least four sections were needed to span the gap in the MSR.

c.) Chinhung-ni Task Force Dog, consisting of the 3d Bn, 7th Infantry, the 92d Armored Field Artillery Bn, and numerous service attachments, all from the 3d Infantry Division (USA), relieved 1/1 (USMC) at Chinhung-ni on the afternoon of 7 December so that 1/1 could attack north to seize the Funchilin Pass area and facilitate the attack south from Koto-ri by the rest of the 1st Marine Division.

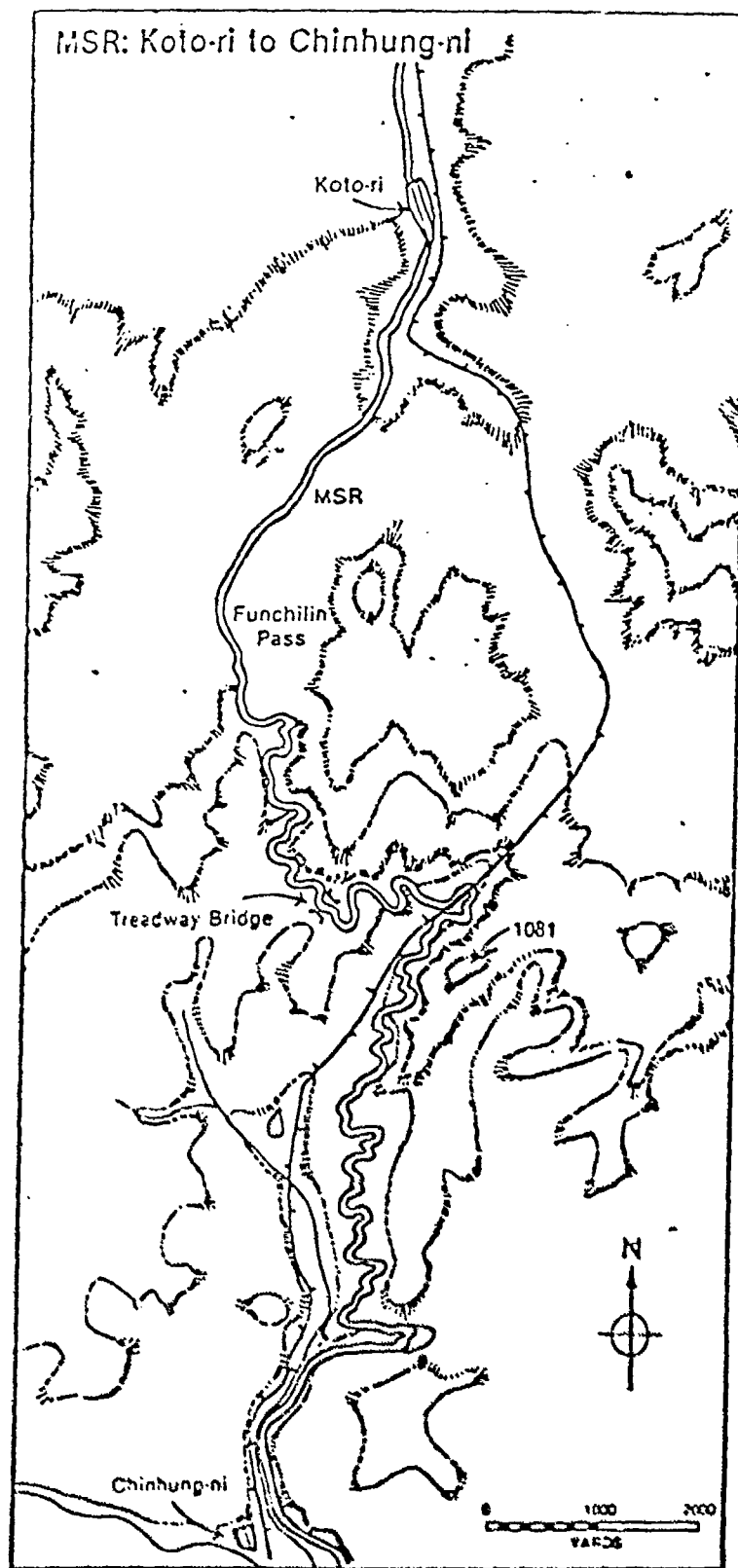
12. 8 December 1950

a.) Koto-ri

(1) The ten miles from Koto-ri to Chinhung-ni contained overall the worst terrain along the whole MSR from Yudam-ni to Hungnam. The MSR wound like a snake in many sections through mountains that left cliffs straight up on one side of the road and straight down on the other. The division plan called for RCT-7 to lead the attack at 0800, 8 December and seize objectives on both sides of the MSR. RCT-5 would follow and seize Hill 1457 which commanded the MSR from a position east of the MSR and two and one half miles south of Koto-ri. 1/1 was to simultaneously attack north from Chinhung-ni to seize Hill 1081 which controlled the Funchilin Pass. RCT-1 was to be the Division rear guard and would follow RCT-7 and RCT-5 down the MSR to Chinhung-ni. Learning from the problems the trains encountered between Hagaru and Koto-ri, this time they were more closely integrated into the combat units and no gaps were to be allowed in the column.

(2) The night of 7-8 December saw a heavy snow storm cover the entire battle area. 1/1 set out at 0200 from Chinhung-ni in order to be able to attack Hill 1081 at 0800. The snow storm continued into the afternoon of 8 December and served to conceal the attack of 1/1. Using surprise 1/1 gained a foothold on Hill 1081, during 8 December after overcoming numerous, interconnected Chinese bunker complexes on both the eastern and western slopes of the Hill. 1/1 spent the night on their newly won ground.

(3) CCF resistance was heavy and RCT-7 made slow progress toward their objectives on both sides of the MSR. The weather and the terrain also hampered movement. 1/5 attacked south from Koto-ri at 1200 and managed to occupy their initial objective (Hill 1457) just prior to



MAP 2A

darkness. RCT-7 and RCT-5 units set in that night (8-9 December) and prepared to continue their attacks at daybreak.

(4) Only scattered small arms fire was received that day and night back in the perimeter of Koto-ri.

b.) Chinhung-ni No significant activity. E Btry, 2/11 and the 92d Armored Field Artillery Bn supported 1/1 with fires from Chinhung-ni.

13. 9 December 1950

a.) Koto-ri

(1) The weather cleared by the morning of 9 December and effective air and artillery support again was available to the Division.

(2) 1/1 continued the attack on Hill 1081, overlooking the Funchilin Pass. A Co, 1/1 seized the crest of the hill at 1500. A Co suffered 112 casualties in the battle while 530 CCF dead were counted on Hill 1081. This was the key terrain between Koto-ri and Chinhung-ni and it was then in friendly hands.

(3) 1/7 continued its advance south along the MSR and seized the objectives it had stopped short of the day before. C Co, 1/7 moved forward and secured the blown bridge site at around 1200. The bridge sections were brought forward by truck and construction of the bridge was completed by 1530. Late in the afternoon a patrol from 1/7 made contact with 1/1 in the Funchilin Pass. Word was sent back to Koto-ri to send forward the division trains. The first vehicles crossed at 1800 on 9 December and crossings continued throughout the night.

(4) In the perimeter at Koto-ri, casualties were evacuated by air, the perimeter was adjusted to facilitate the movement to the south, and plans were made to destroy supplies that would be left at Koto-ri. 1/5 stayed on Hill 1457 (obj D) all day, protecting the MSR. Likewise, RCT-7 units occupied positions that outposted or protected the MSR from Koto-ri to the Funchilin Pass.

b.) Chinhung-ni No significant activity.

14. 10 December 1950

a.) Koto-ri

(1) During the early morning hours of 10 December, 350 CCF attacked 3/1 just south of Koto-ri. This was the only overt enemy attack of the day. However, large numbers of CCF were seen moving south parallel to the MSR. Mortar, artillery, and air support were brought in on

these columns causing heavy enemy casualties and probably preventing an attack on the MSR.

(2) The Division CP left Koto-ri at 1030 on 10 December in C-47 and helicopters and moved to the Division rear CP at Hungnam and began planning for the embarkation on Navy shipping. Up until 10 December, General Smith thought that the Division would occupy the south, southwest sector of a defensive position around Hungnam. On this date, he was informed that the 1st Marine Division would be immediately evacuated by sea to South Korea.

(3) RCT-7 fell in on the MSR with and behind the division trains and moved forward to Chinhung-ni. By 1800 on 10 December RCT-7 and the Division trains had all arrived at Chinhung-ni.

(4) RCT-5 followed RCT-7 as RCT-1 relieved them of their position from which they were protecting the MSR. 1/5, the rear unit of RCT-5, arrived at Chinhung-ni on the early morning hours of 11 December.

(5) RCT-1 commenced the final withdrawal from the perimeter at Koto-ri at 1500 on 10 December. 1/3 was positioned to cover this movement and the 92d Armored Field Artillery Bn fired concentrations on Koto-ri just after the last RCT-1 units left the old perimeter. The forty tanks left in the Division brought up the rear. This was done so that if any of the tanks became disabled on the narrow, winding MSR, they would not hold back the main column.

(6) After Hill 1081 was taken, little effective, organized opposition was offered by the CCF to deter the Division's attack from Koto-ri to Chinhung-ni. However, long-range and sporadic enemy small arms fire was common.

b.) Chinhung-ni Motorized units arriving at Chinhung-ni were organized and then sent right on to Hungnam via the MSR. Trucks from the coastal area were brought forward to pick up the infantry and move them back to Hungnam. However, there was a shortage of trucks and many infantry men walked back to Hungnam. Traffic control was probably the biggest problem at Chinhung-ni during this period.

15. 11 December 1950

a.) Chinhung-ni

(1) At approximately 0600 on 11 December CCF units ambushed the Division column moving south in the vicinity of Sudong. The attack halted the column for five or six hours and left eight friendly KIA, twenty-one WIA, and ten vehicles destroyed. However, the ambushing force was destroyed and the column moved out again and was not attacked south of Chinhung-ni after that.

(2) At the tail end of the column some confusion had resulted when plans for RCT-1's movement had been changed. Due to this confusion, the tanks were protected only by the Division Recon Company instead of an infantry battalion. When the ninth tank from the rear had to stop because its brakes froze, CCF units, hidden in the refugee crowds that were following the withdrawal, attacked the tail end of the column. In that fighting the last seven tanks in the column were lost and left behind. Once this tail end of the column caught up with the rest of the column no further incidents occurred.

(3) At 1300 the last Division elements cleared Chinhung-ni and at 2330 the tanks, the last Division units, arrived at staging areas in the Hungnam harbor complex and the breakout was complete. The final movement from Koto-ri to Chinhung-ni had lasted from 8 to 11 December and had resulted in friendly losses of seventy-five KIA, sixteen MIA, and 256 WIA. In all, the Chosin reservoir campaign had resulted in 37,500 known CCF battle casualties and 4,418 USMC battle and non-battle casualties.

#### D. Turning Points

1. The turning point in this battle occurred when the CCF had not beaten the USMC forces by the morning of 30 November. Initially the CCF had the advantages of surprise, mobility, and mass. The USMC forces had the advantages of superior fire power, control of the air, and esprit de corps. By the 30th, some of the Chinese advantages turned into liabilities. Their surprise was gone and their mobility, which was gained in the rugged mountain country of NE Korea because they were lightly armed and carried few supplies worked against them as they could not bring heavy fire to bear on the Marines and they were running out of ammunition and food. Conversely, for the Marines, time was on their side and their strengths became stronger. They recovered from the surprise attack of the Chinese and methodically figured out how to bring their heavy firepower to bear on the CCF. Control of the air allowed the Marines to be resupplied regularly by air and to attack the Chinese from the air both day and night. And lastly, on the morning of 30 November, when the Marines were not beaten by the great masses of Chinese who had repeatedly attacked them for the previous three nights, they felt that they could not be beaten and their esprit was higher than ever.

2. Major General Smith, 1st Marine Division commander, and his staff recognized the potential strengths of the Chinese before the battle began. He attempted to minimize these CCF strongpoints by insisting that his division not be overextended and thus defeated in small detail and he ensured that large logistical stock piles were established at Yudam-ni and Hagaru before he would kick off his ordered attack to the west and north. Those actions were undoubtedly keys to achieving the successes that the 1st Marine Division achieved during the Chosin Reservoir Campaign.



E. Sequence of Orders/Missions for the 1st Marine Division  
(27 Nov-11 Dec 50)

1. The mission from X Corps that the 1st Marine Division was executing on 27 November was to attack toward Mupyong-ni. The mission was initially conceived as an envelopment in conjunction with the 8th U.S. Army (EUSA) attack in western Korea. However, after the CCF launched its counteroffensive in western Korea, the Marine attack was seen as a means of relieving pressure on the EUSA.

2. On 28 November at Yudam-ni, the COs of RCT-5 and RCT-7 decided jointly to abandon their offensive mission and go on the defensive in view of the severity of the CCF attacks at Yudam-ni.

3. On 29 November, 1st Marine Division ordered RCT-5 to defend Yudam-ni and RCT-7 to clear the MSR to Hagaru and to defend Hagaru once it arrived from Yudam-ni. The X Corps plan was to establish a large defensive position at Hagaru.

4. On 30 November, Lt Gen Almond (X Corps Cdr) decided not to defend at Hagaru but to fall back to a defensive perimeter around Hungnam. This was passed to Maj Gen Smith at a meeting with Lt Gen Almond at Hagaru.

5. At 1920 on 30 November, 1st Marine Division HQ ordered both RCT-7 and RCT-5 to move to Hagaru and to be prepared to continue to attack to the south.

6. On 3 December, X Corps order was issued that confirmed that the 1st Marine Division was to withdraw to Hungnam along the MSR.

7. On 5 December, the 1st Marine Division order to attack from Hagaru to Koto-ri was issued (0800 on 5 December).

8. On 5 December, an X Corps order was issued that detailed a seven and one half mile deep defensive perimeter around Hungnam.

9. On 7 December (at 1815), the 1st Marine Division order to attack from Koto-ri to Chinhung-ni and further south was issued.

10. On 10 December, X Corps informed 1st Marine Division that they would be immediately evacuated by ship from Hungnam and taken to South Korea (Pusan).

## F. Outcome of the Engagement

### 1. Introduction.

The primary focus of this portion will be to answer the question, "Was there a clear tactical victory?" With regard to this question, the reasons for the outcome having evolved as it did will be discussed.

It should be noted from the outset that the question of whether there existed a clear, tactical victory may be largely a matter of definition. What may be perceived as a victory by one antagonist may be viewed quite differently by the opponent. With this caveat aside, the outcome of the Chosin Reservoir battle from the viewpoint of each side is discussed.

### 2. Chinese Perspective.

From the viewpoint of the Chinese the battle around the reservoir represents a clear and decisive victory over the 1st Marine Division. The battle stopped the Division's drive to the north, prevented linkup with the 8th Army to the west, and forced the Division back from the reservoir. The outcome of the battles turned the flank of the X Corps, making the X Corps position in the north of Korea untenable. The result of the battle and the actions in the 8th Army area forced evacuation of the 1st Marine Division and the X Corps from North Korea.

On the other hand, the battles around the Chosin Reservoir failed to envelop the X Corps and pin it against the Sea of Japan which may have led to the Corps' total destruction, the battles failed to destroy the 1st Marine Division as an effective fighting force, and the battle consumed the better part of twelve Chinese Divisions, some of which would not show up in the Chinese order of battle until later in the war.

From the Chinese perspective the battle was a victory but it was a success gained at a very high cost.

### 3. Allied Perspective.

The results of the battles around the Chosin Reservoir were a microcosm of what was occurring across the front in November/December 1950. From the allied point of view, and the point of view of the 1st Marine Division, the allied drive to the Yalu was stopped cold. The defeat of allied forces across the front and the withdrawal and evacuation of the 1st Marine Division and X Corps ended any future hope for an allied strategic victory.

In spite of the situation in the north of Korea in these dark days of 1950, it must be acknowledged that the 1st Marine Division fought one of the most successful retrograde movements in American Military History; that the successful retrograde of the 1st Marine Division may well have saved the entire X Corps from destruction; and that this operation was one of the few bright spots to be seen in this stage of the war.

4. Conclusion---Was there a clear tactical victory?

From a Chinese perspective the answer is an unqualified YES. From a U.S. perspective the answer is less clear. It is clear that the 1st Marine Division can't claim victory over the Chinese; however, in the retrograde operation they can claim tactical success.

5. Prime contributors to battle outcome.

a.) Chinese Victory

The principles of war were alive and well at the Chosin in November 1950. The Chinese used several to their advantage in gaining the success they enjoyed. The element of surprise was achieved through the undetected movement and positioning of large numbers of forces in the Chosin area. The Chinese employed mostly movement by night and movement on foot through rugged terrain. They lacked a long logistics tail characteristic of western armies which made their movement difficult to detect. They hid their forces by day in villages, tunnels, and mine shafts, and sometimes screened the movement of their troops from aerial observation by setting fire to forested areas creating a smoke screen.

This movement of troops and deployment in the area allowed the Chinese to mass troops in large numbers for the attack. This mass of forces was used by the Chinese to place continuous pressure on the elements of the 1st Marine Division. This relentless pressure took its toll on the men and equipment of the Division.

The U.S. forces were not without their contribution to the Chinese success. This contribution was largely a contribution by headquarters higher than the 1st Marine Division.

The Commander in Chief, General MacArthur, showed a marked reluctance, or outright refusal, to accept the intelligence indicators which foretold of the Chinese attack across the front. The Chinese had been identified in the North, but their number was grossly underestimated. There was a fervent desire by staffs and soldiers alike to maintain the offensive toward the Yalu, sometimes without the benefit of objective analysis of the enemy's capabilities or intentions. The cry remained "Get the boys home, end the war by Christmas."

The intelligence assets of the U.S. failed to properly interpret the facts they had gathered about the Chinese presence in North Korea. This failure may have actually been a failure to package the intelligence in a manner that could be believed by those for which it was intended.

Finally, the disposition of forces across the front and within the X Corps, and the terrain on which they would fight made mutual support virtually impossible. The Chinese realized this and took advantage of it.

#### b.) Allied Tactical Successes

The Chinese were most cooperative in some aspects of their operations in the Chosin area. They made contributions to those areas where the U.S. forces found success.

The Chinese tactic of attacking with large masses of troops made these formations particularly vulnerable to air and indirect fire attack as evidenced by the casualty figures from the operation.

The Chinese constant and direct application of their forces made those forces vulnerable to the fires of direct fire weapons of the defenders.

The Chinese had an apparent fixation with the destruction of the forces with whom they were engaged rather than the deep envelopment of the defenders which may have resulted in a more decisive victory for the Chinese. This fixation with the destruction of the enemy forces in general, and the 1st Marine Division specifically, may have its origins in the battle of Sudong where the Chinese apparently formed the impression that the 1st Marine Division was the best unit that the U.S. had in the field. They may have hoped that the destruction of the Marines would cause a collapse in allied morale.

The limited logistics available to the Chinese caused a unit to become ineffective when its issued load of ammunition was exhausted. The Chinese system was not developed to the point where units could be refitted and returned to the line.

The inflexibility and inadequacy of the Chinese command and control system made it virtually impossible for an operation to deviate from the original plan. Thus, when the Marines began to reposition their forces on the west side of the reservoir, the Chinese were incapable of or unwilling to alter their plan for the attack.

The Marines were obviously somewhat responsible for the success of their retrograde operation.

The caution showed by the CG of the Division in spite of GHQ intelligence assessment was a major factor in the battle. MG Smith insisted that his force be supported and supportable each step of the way north. This caution proved to be one of the Division's salvations.

The concentration of the Marines into a "reasonable sector" was an attempt to solve the problem of the lack of mutual support surfaced earlier. One can imagine what may have transpired had the Marine Division remained split by the Chosin Reservoir when the Chinese launched their attack.

The CG took measures to guard, outpost and stockpile supplies along the main supply route. This proved to be of value as the retrograde came to pass.

The preparation of the airstrip at the south of the reservoir at Hagaru was a keen piece of anticipatory thinking and planning which proved its worth as the operation progressed.

The air superiority of the U.S. forces was an obvious advantage for the U.S. forces in contact and aided greatly in the attack of enemy forces and in the resupply and evacuation of the encircled Marines.

There are also numerous intangibles which figured into the Chosin equation.

The initiative of the commanders of the 5th and 7th Marine regiments cannot be understated. They were both combat veterans who cooperated with each other throughout the operation, sometimes in the absence of any formal hierarchy of command between the two regiments.

The cohesion of the unit throughout the withdrawal was a major factor. The morale of the troops wavered little in spite of their desperate circumstance.

The flexibility of the Marine organization must also be mentioned as well as the training given to each Marine. The theory that each member of the Marine team was interchangeable regardless of speciality became a major factor as casualties took their toll. Each Marine could count on his training as a rifleman and was used as such, as the situation called for each man to participate in the defense of the force.

The leadership of the division was determined to govern the speed of the unit's withdrawal based on the speed with which casualties could be evacuated. This was an obvious boost to unit morale and served to give an orderly flavor to the retrograde operation.

Finally, there was never a transition in the minds of the Marines that they were in the throws of a major retreat. The comment of Major General Smith when asked if his marines were retreating is illustrative. His response "...Certainly not, we are just attacking in a different direction."

#### 6. Statistical Outcome

The reported casualties resulting from the engagement serves to emphasize the intensity of the conflict. These figures also substantiate the effectiveness of Marine air forces in support of ground operations:

Enemy losses: (to ground forces)

15,000 KIA

7,500 WIA

Enemy losses: (to Marine air)

10,000 KIA

5,000 WIA

Enemy losses: 37,500 total

Friendly losses:

604 KIA

114 DOW

192 MIA

3,485 WIA

Friendly losses: 4,395 total

These figures represent an unofficial loss exchange ratio of 8.5 to 1 in favor of the 1st Marine Division and attest to the ferocity of the Marine defense and the relentless attacks of the CCF.

These figures do not include any indication of non-battle losses. It is known that the Marines suffered in excess of 7,300 non-battle casualties. It can be assumed that the Chinese suffered a proportionate number.

7. In summary, the Chinese victory was complete, but not without cost. The Chinese ultimately forced the X Corps from North Korea, but in the dogged and orderly retrograde of the 1st Marine Division, a moral victory was achieved.

## V. Assessing the Significance of the Action

### A. Immediate

At battles' end the U.S./U.N. forces suffered 7,500 casualties while inflicting 37,500. Fighting against odds of ten-twelve to one, the 1st Division bested seven enemy divisions and hurt the 9th Army group so badly that it was powerless to prevent the evacuation of Hungnam or move west and assist in the attack on the 8th Army. The 9th Army group was withdrawn from combat and not seen again for three months. The U.S. retrograde of fifty miles was seen by the public, in the context of the larger battle involving the 8th Army, as a major defeat of American arms on a level with Pearl Harbor or Bull Run. There was anger, confusion, and fear in the U.S. over the facts that a mechanized force was defeated by a peasant army and that Chinese intentions were misjudged so badly. Confidence in Truman and MacArthur crashed. Yet, the Division was able to save itself and permit an orderly withdrawal from Hungnam of 105,000 U.S. personnel, 91,000 Korean refugees, and all of its equipment. China's prestige was raised exponentially by its ability to defeat the West in a major battle, with MacArthur's stature only adding to the effect. Another result was that the communists, essentially the Chinese, changed their war aims again. They wanted no part of negotiations and Chou En-lai turned down proposals for a ceasefire on 22 December. The communists would make a second try to unify Korea under communist rule. Examined objectively, the effect of this battle was more moral than physical. Additionally, because of the size of the force involved in the different zones and the geography of Korea, this battle, in fact the whole X Corps battle, was a side show to the 8th Army's troubles. Thus, when looking at the long-term effects of the battle, one must consider the entire thrust of Chinese forces in late November 1950. For the Marines the battle was decisive, for the possibility of annihilation was certainly great. The Marines performed brilliantly, but the battle was not decisive to either side.

### B. Long Term

Looking at the battle as part of the initial Chinese campaign, the most dramatic long-term result was that the war aims of the antagonists changed. By kicking U.N. forces out of North Korea, the Chinese thwarted the U.N. aim of unifying Korea. The U.N. aim returned to restoring the integrity of South Korea. In addition to that of the U.N., the U.S. added the containment of Chinese expansion to its war aims. It caused the administration to seek a limited war without a declaration of war or mobilization. By 29 December, the administration had decided that no large additional forces would be sent to Korea and that a major war would not be fought there. The American public supported this objective for the average man had no desire to fight a general war with China if settlement was possible. He did not want to die in Korea for vague goals. Ultimately, the intervention of the Chinese helped to stimulate the policy of deterring war with nuclear weapons not ground troops. Another effect on American

objectives was to foster the belief that communism was monotheistic and must be confronted everywhere. This led to the U.S. supporting dictators who repressed legitimate desires. Support was often refused nationalist leaders who were attempting to overthrow the dictator. Thus, the U.S. was often seen as a colonial power while the Soviet Union was seen as a benefactor who supported nationalist movements. Within the U.S., the intervention helped spark the "Great Debate" over foreign policy which raged for a year or more. This debate pitted isolationists, hawks/conservatives, and liberal/negotiators against one another.

Another long-term effect was that China assumed the status of a world power and Asian power broker by their ability to prevent unification and defeat Western powers. China was seen as a force to be reckoned with since they rolled back, for the first time, the Pacific thrust of America. Communists throughout Asia were heartened. In a physical sense China's power was improved because the Soviets subsequently reequipped the PLA. Also, through its hate campaigns the communists were able to increase their hold over the masses and solve an internal problem. Two detrimental effects of China's entry into the war were that her economic growth was slowed and she was prevented from seizing Taiwan.

The effects of this intervention and battle were catastrophic for U.S.-Chinese relations. Any flexibility of the two countries to deal with each other was gone. Each considered the other its implacable enemy and refused to negotiate or establish relations for over twenty years. The U.S. prevented China's entry into the U.N. for a number of years, further isolating her. The U.S. was not able to exploit Soviet Chinese differences for many years. The U.S. placed a total embargo on goods shipped to China and froze all Chinese assets in the U.S. This further isolated China and prevented dialogue between the two countries. Perhaps the most far-reaching effect was that China was prevented from retaking Taiwan by military force, and U.S. support for Taiwan independence, non-existent prior to the intervention, crystalized and continued over many years, probably insuring the island economic, as well as military, survival. Still today the issue of Taiwan is one of the most difficult problems we face in negotiating with China.

Another long-term effect was the rearming of the U.S. Prior to the war American forces were in large measure "paper tigers." Particularly after the Chinese intervention, military budgets and forces were increased. Moreover, a gradual building of the industrial base was initiated to serve as a bulwark for the future. The year 1953 marked the end of communist expansion by force. With the West threatening total war, communist efforts in the '50s, '60s, and '70s were directed towards insurgencies and guerrilla wars.

On the domestic scene the events of November and December 1950 helped to fuel the "Red Scare" which ended in the excesses of McCarthyism. Also, the average American began to lose faith in the U.N. to solve



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